

THE
CHRISTIAN
IN *113 Duke*
Compleat Armour. *Beverley-*
OR, A
TREATISE
OF THE
SAINTS WAR
AGAINST THE
DEVIL:

Henry G. Harrison
WHEREIN

A Discovery is made of that Grand Enemy of
GOD and his People, in his Policies, Power, Seat of his
Empire, Wickedness, and chief design he hath against the Saints.

A
MAGAZIN OPEN'D,

From whence the Christian is furnished with Spiritual Arms for the
Battel, help'd on with his Armour, and taught the Use of his Weapon,
together with the happy Issue of the whole War.

By WILLIAM GURNALL, M. A. of Emanuel Colledge, now Pastor
of the Church of Christ in Lavenham, Suffolk.

The Sixth Edition.

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A Discourse in answer of that Grand Slander of
GOD and his Church, in this wicked Age, of his
being a God of War, and of his being a God of Blood.

A
MAGAZINE OPEN'D,
in which is set forth the true Nature and Use of the
Sword, and the Christian's Duty in the Use of it, with
the Christian's Duty in the Use of his Weapon.

By WILLIAM GURNEY, M.A. of Trinity College, near Oxford.

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Jan 24 1654

To my Dearly Beloved Friends and Neighbours,
the Inhabitants of LAVENHAM.

My Dear Friends,



S O L O M O N saith, *The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar*, Prov. 19. 22. If you be of his mind, I dare promise these Notes, (which I here devote to your service) a kind acceptance at your hands. You will find me to be the *poor man*, by the mite I present you with; but the hearty desire of your eternal happiness from which it comes, will (I hope) clear me from being *the liar*. I never could be so serviceable to you, as many Ministers are to their people, having been with you in much weakness; and still it is the good pleasure of God, I should be staked down to a short tedder of strength and other abilities; I have reason therefore, (that I may, though not recompence that want, yet express my deep sense thereof) to crowd the more love into the little I can do for you. And truly my heart is enlarged to you, and to God for you. If any thing makes me loth to be gone into another world, (which my dropping house bids me above many prepare for) it is not the least, to think I shall leave no more of you walking in the way to eternal life, and you who are on your way thither, in no closer Gospel-order for your mutual help and comfort in your journey: yea, while I am among you, little do you think how much of your poor Ministers life lyes at your mercy. If I should measure my life by the joy of it, (as indeed who doth not?) then in some uprightness I can say with *Paul*, I live as I see any of you stand fast in the Lord, and dye as I see others stand fast in their sins, not to be moved with all the entreaties of the Gospel which have wooed you. And why (my dear friends) should not the life of your souls be much more precious in your own sight than mine? But I forbear, I would not willingly be thought, as some husbands are, to be kinder to you abroad before strangers, than I am at home.

What I present you with in this Treatise, is a dish from your own Table, and so (I hope) will go down the better. You cannot despise it (though the fare be mean) except you will blame your selves who chose the Cook. I cannot be earnest with others, to bestow so much time as to read over these plain Sermons, lest it should be to their loss; it were but to call them from gathering sheaves in the more fruitful labours of others, to glean a few ears, and those but thin also in mine; yet with you, my people, I may be a little bold. Physicians say, the mothers milk, though not so weighty as anothers, if no noxious humour be tasted in it, because natural, is more proper for the child than a strangers. And, I think, it would not be an error, if I should say it held in the milk which the Minister gives to his flock. A people conscientiously lying at the breasts of their own Ministers, (if the milk he gives be wholesome) may expect the blessing of God for their nourishment, though it has not so much lusciousness to please the curious taster, as some others. Well, whatever these Sermons were, some of those few spirits which you found in hearing, will be missing in the

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reading of them. It is as easie to paint fire with the heat, as with pen and ink to commit that to paper, which occurs in preaching. There is as much difference between a Sermon in the Pulpit, and printed in a Book, as between milk in the warm breast, and in a sucking-bottle, yet what it loseth in the lively taste, is recompenced by the convenience of it. The Book may be at hand when the Preacher cannot; and truly, that's the chief end of printing, that as the bottle and spoon is used when the mother is sick or out of the way, so the Book, to quiet the Christian and stay his stomach in the absence of the Ordinance. He that readeth Sermons and good Books at home to save his pains of going to hear, is a Thief to his soul in a religious habit: he consults for his ease, but not for his profit; he eats cold meat, when he may have hot: He hazards the losing the benefit of both, by contemning of one. If the Spouse could have had her beloved at home, she needed not to have coursed the streets and waited on the publick. O what need we offer sacrifice for sacrifice, rob God of one duty, to pay him another? He hath laid our work in better order, one wheel would not interfere with another, if we did more regularly. A chief part of *David's* Arithmetick of numbring our days, lies in that which we call division, as to cast the account of this our short life so, as to divide the little whole sum thereof into the several portions of time due for the performing of every duty in. An Instrument is not in tune, except it have all the strings; and those will not make good Musick, if the Musician hath not wisdom to cause every string to speak in its due time: The Christian is not in tune, except he takes in all the duties of his place and calling; neither will the performance of them be harmonious in Gods ear, if every one be not done in its proper season. O my friends, labour not only to do the duty of your place, but that duty in its own place also. Hear when you should hear. Know your time for closet, and time for shop: and when your retiring hour comes, a few minutes now and then spent in taking a repetition of what formerly you heard, shall not (I hope) another day be reckoned with your lost time. The Subject of the Treatise is solemn, *A war between the Saint and Satan*, and that so bloody a one, that the cruellest which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and childs play to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to destroying of souls? 'Tis a sad meditation indeed, to think how many thousands have been sent to the grave in a few late years among us by the sword of man; But far more astonishing to consider how many of those may be sent to Hell by the sword of Gods wrath. 'Tis a spiritual War you shall read of, and that not a history of what was fought many ages past and is now over; but of what now is doing, the Tragedy is at present acting, and that not at the furthest end of the world, but what concerns thee and every one that reads it. The stage whereon this War is fought, is every mans own soul. Here is no Neuter in this War, the whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God. It was a great question some years past, Who are you for? The not giving a good account to which, hath cost many a life. O my dear friends, think solemnly what answer you mean to give to God and conscience, when they in a dying hour shall ask every one of you, Who art thou for? 'Tis an incomparable mercy, that you are yet where you may chuse your side: It will not be ever so, may be not a day to an end. If once in another world, you must then stand to your colours; yet you may run from the Devils quarters, and be taken into Christs pay. The Drum beats in the Gospel for Volunteers. O, the Lord make you willing in the day of his power. I know you all would be on the surest side. O what can you be sure of, while under the Devils Ensign, but damnation? The curse of God cleaves to him and all that takes part with him. O let not the little plunder and spoil of sinful pleasures and pelf, bewitch you still to follow his Camp. What is that souldier better for his booty he gets in a fight, who before he can get off with it, is himself slain upon the place? (so many have been served in these wars, if reports be true.) 'Tis that thou must certainly look for. The piece is charg'd, and aim taken at thy breast, which will be thy eternal death if thou perishest. Gods threatnings will go off at last, and then where art thou? Where, but in Hell, where thy wedge of gold and Babylonish garment, thy wages of unrighteousness will do thee little stead? O Neighbours, I am loth to leave you in the way where Gods bullets fly; but I must have a word for you, my Christian friends, who have espoused Christs quarrel, and are in the field against Satan. My heart is towards you, who have thus willingly offered your selves among the Lords people to his help against the mighty. He can destroy him without you, but he takes your love

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love as kindly as if he could not. God hath sent me (as *Jesse* did *David*) with this little present to you and the rest of my Brethren that are in his Camp. May it be but to the strengthening of your hearts and hands in fighting the Lords battels, and I shall bless God that put it into my heart thus to visit you. O hold on, dear friends, in your Christian warfare, let none take the crown from you. *Whet your courage at the Throne of grace*, from whence all your recruits of soul-strength come. *Send faith oft up the hill of the Promise*, to see and bring you the certain news of Christs coming to you, yea, for you, and assured victory with him. *Read the exploits*, which Christs Worthies by faith have done, and in their conquests read your own, for in them *he spake with us*, as the Prophet of *Jacob*. Be thankful for every victory you get, and let not the howling wilderness, yet before you, put the song of your praises for temptations past out of tune, yet rejoyce with trembling, as those who are itill in your enemies countrey, and must keep by the sword what you get by the sword: Be sure you stand in close order amongst your selves; These times give us too many sad examples of such, who first fell from communion with their Brethren, and then into the devourers hand; straglers are soon snap'd; you will find you are safest in a body. Take heed of a private spirit; let not only your particular safety, but of the whole Army of Saints be in your eye and care, especially that company in which you march, (Congregation I mean;) that souldier which can see an enemy in fight with his brethren, and not help them, he makes it but the more easie for the enemy to slay himself at last: Say not therefore, *Am I my brothers Keeper*? God would not keep him that cared not to keep his Brother. Watch over one another, not to play the Criticks on your brothers failings, and triumph when he halts, but to help him up if he falls, or if possibly, to keep him from falling by a timely rescue, as *Abisbai* came to *David's* succour. Keep your rank and file. We see what advantage Satan hath got in these loose times since we have learn'd to fight him out of order, and the private souldier (Christian I mean) hath taken the Officers work out of his hands. Harden your selves against the scandals, which the cowardize and treachery of false brethren hath given you. He is the right souldier that is not discouraged by those that run from, or that are slain in the battel; but still presseth on to victory, though he goes to it over the backs of others that are killed upon the place. In a word, Disentangle your hearts what you can from the love of, and distracting cares for this present world. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be souldier, 2 Tim. 2. 4. If it behoves any to have their Will ready made, and their worldly interests set at home stay, then surely the souldier: if any souldier, then the Christian. Get but once your hearts mortified to the world, and care rolled upon God, for name, estate, and relations here, and then you are fit to march where ever Christ will lead you. The want of this hath made many run home to save their own private stake there, when they should have been in the field for Christ. And now, my Christian friends, march on, not in the confidence of your Armour, but in the power of his might, who hath promised shortly to subdue Satan under your feet. I have done, only I must crave pardon of you, for rending this part of the Treatise from the other, which neither my little strength or leisure would suffer me to grasp at once.

But this having first put forth its hand in preaching, can make no great breach upon that, though it get the start a little in printing. Let me therefore, dear friends, (if God shall make this imperfect birth any way serviceable to your faith,) humbly desire; that you would, as continue to strive at the throne of grace for a blessing on my poor Ministry among you, so also lift up a prayer, that strength may be given, to bring forth what of this yet is undeliver'd. I do not send you thither where I intend not to meet you, but shall desire grace to be found faithful in striving with you, and for you, that amongst those who find any spiritual advantage from my weak labours, you to whom they are chiefly devoted, may not receive the least.

So prayeth your affectionate, though unworthy Minister,

Lavenham, Jan. 1. 1655.

William Gurnall.



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


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A TREATISE OF THE Whole Armour of God.

The Introduction.

January 21st 68

EPHES. 6. 10.

2nd Reading, Begun 18th June
3rd 18th March 1850 1847

Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

PAUL was now in Bonds, yet not so close kept as to be denied Pen and Paper: God (it seems) gave him some favour in the sight of his Enemies: Paul was Nero's Prisoner; Nero was much more God's. And while God had work for Paul, he found him Friends both in Court and Prison. Let Persecutors send the Saints to Prison, God can provide a Keeper for their turn.

But how doth this great Apostle spend his time in Prison? Not in publishing Invectives against those (though the worst of men) who had laid him in; a piece of Zeal which the holy Sufferers of those times were little acquainted with: Nor in politick Counsels, how he might wind himself out of his trouble; by fardid flattery of, or sinful compliance with, the great Ones of the Times. Some would have used any Pick-lock to have opened a passage to their Liberty; and not scrupled (so escape they might) whether they got out at the Door or Window: But this holy man was not so fond of Liberty or Life, as to purchase them with the least hazard to the Gospel. He

knew too much of another World, to bid so high for the enjoying of this; and therefore he is at a point what his enemies can do with him, well knowing he could go to Heaven whether they would or no: No, the great care which lay upon him, was for the Churches of God, as a faithful Steward he labours to secure the Kingdom of God in order before his departure; no Dispatches sent to Court to procure Liberty; but many to the Churches to help them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. There is no such way to be even with the Devil and his Instruments for all their spite against us, as by doing what good we can, where-ever we become. The Devil had as good have let Paul alone; for he no sooner comes into Prison, but he falls a preaching, at which the Gates of Satans Prison fly open, and poor sinners come forth. Happy for Onesimus that Paul was sent to Caesar; God had an Errand for Paul to do to him and others, which the Devil never dreamt of. Nay, he doth not only preach in Prison; but that he may do the Devil all the mischief he can, he sends his Epistles to the Churches:

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that

that tasting his spirit in his afflictions, and reading his faith, now ready to be offered up, they might much more be confirmed, amongst which *Ephesus* was not least in his thoughts, as you may perceive by his abode with them two years together, *Acts* 19. 10. as also by his sending for the Elders of this Church as far as *Miletus*, in his last journey to *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 20. 17. to take his farewell of them, as never to see their face in this World more. And surely the sad impression which that heart-breaking departure left upon the spirits of these Elders, yea, the whole Church, (by them acquainted with this mournful News) might stir up *Paul*, now in prison, to write unto this Church, that having so much of his Spirit, yea, of the Spirit of the Gospel left in their hands to converse with, they might more patiently take the News of his death.

In the former part of this Epistle he soars high in the mysteries of Faith. In the latter, according to his usual method, he descends to Application: where we find him contracting all those truths, as beams together, in a powerful Exhortation, the more to enkindle their hearts, and powerfully perfwade them to walk worthy of their Vocation, chap. 4. 1. which then is done, when the Christian's life is transparent, that the grace of the Gospel shines forth in the power of holiness on every side, and from all his relations, as a Candle in a Crystal Glass, not in a dark Lanthorn, lightfom one way, and dark another: and therefore he runs over the several Relations of *Husband*, *Wife*, *Parents*, *Children*, *Adaster* and *Servants*, and presseth the same in all these.

Now having set every one in his proper place, about his particular duty; as a wise General after he hath ranged his Army, and drawn them forth into Rank and File, he makes this following Speech at the Head of this *Ephesian* Camp, all in Martial phrase, as best suiting the Christians Calling, which is a continued warfare with the World, and the Prince of the World.

The Speech it self contains two parts.

First, A short, but sweet and powerful Encouragement, v. 10.

Secondly, The other part is spent in several Directions, for their managing this War the more successfully, with some Motives here and there sprinkled among them. To begin with the first.

1. The word of Encouragement to Battel. With this he begins his speech: *Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord*; the best way indeed to prepare them for the following Directions. A soul deeply posselt with fear, and dispirited with strong impressions of danger, is in no posture for counsel. As we see in an Army when put to the run with some sudden Alarm, and apprehensions of danger, 'tis hard rallying them into order till the fear and fear is over; therefore the Apostle first raiseth up their spirits, *Be strong in the Lord*: as if he should say, Perhaps some drooping souls find their hearts fail them, while they see their enemies so strong, and they so weak; so numerous, and they so few; so well appointed, and they so naked and unarmed; so skilful and expert at Arms, but they green and raw Souldiers: Let not these, or any other thoughts dismay you; but with undaunted courage march on, and be strong in the Lord; on whose performance lies the streis of the Battel, and not on your skill or strength: It is not the least of a Ministers care and skill in dividing the Word, so to press the Christian's duty, as not to oppress his spirit with the weight of it, by laying it on the Creatures own shoulders, and not on the Lords strength, as here our Apostle teacheth us.

In this Verse, *First*, Here is a familiar Compellation; *My Brethren*.

Secondly, Here is the Exhortation; *Be strong*.

Thirdly, Here is a Cautionary Direction annexed to the Exhortation; *In the Lord*.

Fourthly, Here is an encouraging Amplification of the Direction; *And in the power of his might, or in his mighty power*.

CHAP. I.

Of Christian Courage and Resolution, wherefore necessary, and how obtained.

WE shall wave the Compellation, and begin with the Exhortation: *Be strong*, that is, be of good courage, so commonly used in Scripture-phrase, 2 Chron. 32. 7. *Be strong and courageous*. So *Isa*. 35. 4. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong*. Or, unite all the powers of your souls, and muster up your whole force, you will have use of all you can make or get. From whence the Point is this.

Dott. The Christian of all men needs courage and resolution. Indeed there is nothing he doth as a Christian, or can do, but is an act of valour: A cowardly spirit is beneath the lowest duty of a Christian, *Josh*. 1. 7. *Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou maist*; what, stand in battel against those warlike Nations? No, but that thou maist observe to do according to all the Law, which *Moses* my Servant commanded thee. It requires more prowess and greatness of spirit

spirit to obey God faithfully, than to command an Army of men; to be a Christian, than to be a Captain. What seems less, than for a Christian to pray? yet this cannot be performed aright, without a Princely spirit: As *Jacob* is said to behave himself like a *Prince*, when he did but pray: for which he came out of the Field Gods Bannarite. Indeed if you call that Prayer, which a carnal person performs, nothing more poor and dastard-like. Such a one is as great a stranger to this Enterprize, as the Craven Soldier is to the exploits of a valiant Chieftain. The Christian in Prayer comes up close to God, with an humble boldness of Faith, and takes hold of him, wrestles with him; yea, will not let him go without a Blessing, and all this in the face of his own sins; and Divine Justice, which let fly upon him from the fiery mouth of the Law; while the others boldness in prayer is but the Child, either of Ignorance in his mind, or hardness in his heart: whereby not feeling his sins, and not knowing his danger, he rushes upon duty with a blind confidence; which soon quails, when Conscience awakes, and gives him the Alarm, that his sins are upon him, as the *Philistines* on *Samson*; alas, then in a fright the poor-spirited wretch throws down his weapon, flies the presence of God with guilty *Adam*, and dares not look him in the face. Indeed there is no duty in a Christians whole course of walking with God, or acting for God, but is lined with many difficulties, which shoot like enemies through the Hedges at the Christian, whilst he is marching toward Heaven: so that he is put to dispute every inch of ground as he goes. They are only a few noble spirited souls (who dare take Heaven by force) that are fit for his calling. For the further proof of this Point, see some few pieces of service that every Christian engageth in.

First, The Christian is to proclaim and prosecute an irreconcilable War against his bosom-sins; those sins which have lain nearest his heart, must now be trampled under his feet. So *David*, *I have kept my self from my iniquity*. Now what courage and resolution doth this require? You think *Abraham* was tried to purpose, when called to take his Son, his Son *Isaac*, his only Son whom he loved, *Gen. 22.2* and offer him up with his own hands, and no other, yet what was that to this? Soul, take thy Lust, thy only Lust, which is the Child of thy dearest Love, thy *Isaac*, the sin which hath caused most Joy and Laughter, from which thou hast promised thy self the greatest return of pleasure or profit; as ever thou lookest to see my face with comfort, lay hands on it, and offer it up: pour out the blood of it before me, run the sacrificing Knife of Mortification into the very heart of it, and this freely, joyfully, (for it is no pleasing Sacrifice that is offered with a countenance cast down) and all this now, before

thou hast one embrace more from it. Truly this is a hard Chapter, flesh and blood cannot bear this saying; our Lust will not lye so patiently on the Altar, as *Isaac*, or as a Lamb that is brought to the slaughter, which is dumb, but will roar and shriek; yea, even shake and rend the heart with their hideous Out-cries. Who is able to express the Conflicts, the Wrestlings, the Convulsions of spirit the Christian feels, before he can bring his heart to this work? Or who can fully set forth the Art, the Rhetorical Insinuations, which such a Lust will plead with for it self? One while Satan will extenuate and mince the matter: It is but a little one, O spare it, and thy soul shall live for all that. Another while it flatters the soul with the secrecy of it: Thou maist keep me and thy credit also; I will not be seen abroad in thy company to shame thee among thy Neighbours: shut me up in the most retired Room thou hast in thy heart, from the hearing of others (if thou wilt) only let me now and then have the wanton embraces of thy Thoughts and Affections in secret. If that cannot be granted, then Satan will seem only to desire execution may be stayed awhile, as *Jephtha's* Daughter of her Father; *Let me alone a moneth or two, and then do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth*, *Judg. 17. 2, 37*. well knowing few such reprieved Lusts, but at last obtain their full pardon; yea, recover their favour with the Soul. Now what resolution doth it require to break through such violence and importunity, and notwithstanding all this, to do present execution? Here the valiant Sword-men of the World have shewed themselves meet Cowards, who have come out of the Field with victorious Banners, and then lived, yea, died slaves to a bare Lust at home. As one could say of a great *Roman* Champion (who as he rode in his Triumphant Chariot through *Rome*, had his eye never off a Courtizan that walk'd along the street) Behold, how this goodly Captain that conquered such potent Armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman.

Secondly, The Christian is to walk singularly, not after the Worlds guise, *Rom. 12. 2*. We are commanded not to be conformed to this World; that is, not to accommodate our selves to the corrupt Customs of the World. The Christian must not be of such a complying nature, to cut the Coat of his Profession according to the Fashion of the Times, or the Humour of the Company he falls into; like that Courtier, who being asked how he could keep his preferment in such changing Times, which one while had a Prince for Popery, another while against Popery? Answered, He was *E Salice, non ex Quercu ortus*: He was not a stubborn Oak, but bending Offer, that could yield to the wind: No, the Christian must stand fixt to his Principles, and not change his Habit; but freely shew what

Country-man he is, by his holy constancy in the Truth. Now, what an *Odium*, what Snares, what Dangers doth this singularity expose the Christian to? Some will hoot and mock him, as one in a *Spanish* Fashion would be laught at in your streets. Thus *Michal* flouted *David*. Indeed the World counts the Christian for his singularity of Life the only Fool; which I have thought gave the first occasion to that Nick-name whereby men commonly express a silly man or a Fool: Such a one (say they) is a meer *Abraham*; that is, in the worlds account, a Fool. But why an *Abraham*? because *Abraham* did that which Carnal Reason (the Worlds Idol) laughs at as meer folly; he left a present Estate in his Fathers House, to go he knew not whither, to receive an Inheritance he knew not when. And truly such Fools all the Saints are branded for, by the wise World. You know the man and his *Communication*, said *Jehu* to his Companions, asking what that mad Fellow came for, who was no other than a Prophet, 2 *Kings* 9. 11. Now this requires courage to despise the shame, which the Christian must expect to meet withal for his singularity. Shame is that which proud Nature most disdains. To avoid which, many durst not confess *Christ* openly, *John* 7. 13. Many lose Heaven, because they are ashamed to go in a Fools Coat thither. Again, as some will mock, so others will persecute to death, meerly for this Non-conformity in the Christians Principles and Practices to them. This was the Trap laid for the three Children; they must dance after *Nebuchadnezzars* Pipe, or burn. This was the plot laid to ensnare *Daniel*, who walked so unblameably, that his very enemies gave him this testimony, that he had no fault, but his singularity in his Religion, *Dan*. 6. 5. 'Tis a great honour to a Christian, yea, to Religion it self, when all their enemies can say, is, they are precise, and will not do as we do. Now in such a case as this, when the Christian must turn or burn; leave praying, or become a prey to the cruel teeth of bloody men; how many politick retreats, and self-preserving distinctions would a cowardly unresolved heart invent? The Christian, that hath so great opposition, had need be well lock'd into the saddle of his Profession, or else he will be soon dismounted.

Thirdly, The Christian must keep on his way to Heaven in the midst of all the scandals that are cast upon the ways of God, by the Apostasie and foul Falls of false Professors. There were ever such in the Church, who by their sad miscarriages in judgement and practice, have laid a stone of offence in the way of Profession, at which weak Christians are ready to make a stand (as they at the bloody body of *Asabel*, 2 *Sam*. 2. 22.) not knowing whether they may venture any further in their Profession, seeing such (whose gifts they so much admired) lye before them, wallow-

ing in the blood of their slain profession; of zealous professors, to prove, perhaps, fiery persecutors; of strict performers of Religious Duties, irreligious Atheists; no more like the men they were some years past, than the Vale of *Sodom*, (now a Bog and Quagmire) is, to what it was, when for fruitfulness compared to the Garden of the Lord. We had need have a holy resolution to bear up against such discouragements, and not to faint; as *Joshuah* who lived to see the whole Camp of *Israel* (a very few excepted) revolting, and in their hearts, turning back to *Egypt*, and yet with an undaunted spirit maintained his integrity; yea, resolved, though not a man beside would bear him company, yet he would serve the Lord.

Fourthly, The Christian must trust in a withdrawing God, *Isa*. 50. 10. *Let him that walks in darkness, and sees no light, trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* This requires a holy boldness of faith indeed to venture into Gods presence, as *Esther* into *Ahasuerus*, when no smile is to be seen on his face, no Golden Scepter of the promise perceived by the soul, as held forth to embolden it to come near, then to press in with this noble resolution, *If I perish, I perish*: Nay more, to trust not only in a withdrawing, but a killing God, *Job* 13. 15. Not when his Love is hid, but when his wrath breaks forth: Now for a soul to make his approaches to God by a recumbency of Faith, while God seems to fire upon it, and shoot his frowns like envenomed Arrows into it: This is hard work, and will try the Christians Metal to purpose. Yet such a masculine spirit we find in that poor Woman of *Canaan*, who takes up the Bullets *Christ* shot at her, and with an humble boldness of Faith sends them back again in her prayer.

Fifthly, The Believer is to persevere in his Christian course to the end of his life; his work and his life must go off the Stage together. This adds weight to every other difficulty of the Christians calling: We have known many who have gone into the Field, and liked the work of a Souldier for a Battel or two, but soon have had enough, and come running home again; but few can bear it as a constant Trade. Many are soon engaged in holy duties, easily perswaded to take up a profession of Religion, and as easily perswaded to lay it down; like the New Moon, which shines a little in the first part of the Night, but is down before half the Night be gone; lightsom professors in their youth, whose old age is wrapt up in thick darkness of sin and wickedness: O this persevering is a hard word! this taking up the Cross daily, this praying always, this watching night and day, and never laying aside our Cloaths and Armour; I mean, indulging our selves to remit and unbend in our holy waiting on God, and walking with God, this

this sends many sorrowful away from Christ ; yet this is the Saints duty, to make Religion his every-day-work, without any vacation from one end of the year to the other. These few Instances are enough to shew what need the Christian hath of Resolution. The Application follows.

Use 1. This gives us then a Reason why there are so many Professors, and so few Christians indeed ; so many that run, and so few obtain ; so many go into the Field against Satan, and so few come out Conquerors ; because all have a desire to be happy, but few have courage and resolution to grapple with the difficulties, that meet them in their way to happiness. All *Israel* came joyfully out of *Egypt* under *Moses* his conduct ; yea, and a mixed multitude with them ; but when their Bellies were a little pinched with hunger, and their greedy desires of a present *Canaan* deferred ; yea, in stead of peace and plenty, war and penury ; they (like white-liver'd Souldiers) are ready to fly from their Colours, and make a dishonourable Retreat into *Egypt*. Thus the greatest part of those who profess the Gospel, when they come to push of Pike, to be tried what they will do, deny, endure for Christ, grow sick of their Enterprize : Alas, their hearts fail them ; they, like the waters of *Bethlehem* ; but if they must dispute their passage with so many enemies, they will even content themselves with their own Cistern, and leave Heaven to others that will venture more for it. O how many part with Christ at this Cross way ! like *Orpah*, that go a Furlong or two with Christ, till he goes to take them off from their worldly hopes, and bids them prepare for hardship ; and then they fairly kiss and leave him ; loth indeed to lose Heaven, but more loth to buy it at so dear a rate. Like some green heads, that childishly make choice of some sweet Trade (such as is the Confectioners) from a liquorish tooth they have to the Junkets it affords ; but meeting with sour sawce of labour and toyl that goes with them, they give in, and are weary of their service : the sweet bait of Religion hath drawn many to nibble at it, who are offended with the hard service it calls to ; it requires another spirit than the World can give or receive, to follow Christ fully.

Use 2. Let this then exhort you, Christians, to labour for this holy resolution and prowess, which is so needful for your Christian Profession, that without it you cannot be what you profess. The Fearful are in the Forlorn of those that march for Hell, *Rev. 21*. The violent and valiant are they, which take Heaven by force : Cowards never won Heaven. Say not, thou hast Royal blood running in thy Veins, and art begotten of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by this heroick spirit, to dare to be holy in sight of men and Devils. The Eagle tries her young

ones by the Sun ; Christ tries his Children by their Courage, that dare look on the face of death and danger for his sake, *Mark 8. 34. 35*. O how uncomely a sight is it, a bold Sinner, and a fearful Saint ! one resolved to be wicked, and a Christian wavering in his holy course ; to see guilt put innocency to flight, and Hell keep the Field, impudently braving it with displayed Banners of open prophaneness, and Saints to hide their Colours for shame, or run from them for fear, who should rather wrap themselves in them, and die upon the place, than thus betray the glorious Name of God, which is called upon by them to the scorn of the uncircumcised. Take heart therefore, O ye Saints, and be strong, your cause is good, God himself espouseth your quarrel, who hath appointed you his own Son, General of the Field, called the Captain of our Salvation, *Heb. 2*. He shall lead you on with courage, and bring you off with honour. He lived and died for you, he will live and die with you ; for mercy and tenderness to his Souldiers, none like him. *Trajan*, 'tis said, rent his cloaths to bind up his Souldiers wounds ; Christ poured out his Blood as Balm to heal his Saints wounds, tears off his flesh to bind them up. For provess, none to compare with him ; he never turn'd his head from danger ; no, not when Hells malice and Heavens Justice appeared in Field against him : *Knowing all that should come upon him, went forth and said, Whom seek ye ? John 18. 4*. For success insuperable ; he never lost Battel : even when he lost his Life, he won the Field, carrying the Spoils thereof in the triumphant Chariot of his Ascension to Heaven with him : where he makes an open shew of them to the unspeakable joy of Saints and Angels. You march in the midst of gallant Spirits, your fellow-Souldiers, every one the Son of a Prince : Behold, some (enduring with you here below a great fight of afflictions and temptations) take Heaven by storm and force : Others you may see after many Assaults, Repulses and Rallyings of their Faith and Patience, got upon the Walls of Heaven, Conquerors ; from whence they do, as it were, look down, and call you their fellow-brethren on Earth, to march up the Hill after them, crying aloud, Fall on, and the City is your own, as now it is ours ; who for a few days conflict, are now crowned with Heavens Glory ; one moments enjoyment of which, hath dried up all our tears, healed all our wounds, and made us forget the sharpness of the Fight, with the joy of our present Victory. In a word, Christians, God and Angels are Spectators, observing how you quit your selves like Children of the Most High : Every Exploit your Faith doth against Sin and Satan, causeth a shout in Heaven, while you valiantly prostrate this temptation, scale that difficulty, regain the other ground you even now lost, out of your enemies hands.

hands. Your dear Saviour (who stands by with a reserve for your relief at a pinch) his very heart leaps within him for joy, to see the proof of your Love to him, and Zeal for him in all your Combats, and will not forget all the faithful service you have done in his Wars on Earth: but when thou comest out of the Field, will receive thee with the like joy, as he was entertained himself at his return to Heaven, of his Father. Now, Christian, if thou meanest thus courageously to bear up against all opposition, in thy march to Heaven, as thou shouldst do well, to raise thy spirit with such generous and soul-ennobling thoughts; so in an especial manner look thy principles be well fixt, or else thy heart will be unstable, and an unstable heart is weak as water, it cannot excel in courage. Two things are required to fix our principles.

First, An established judgement in the truth of God. He that knows not well what, or whom he fights for, may soon be perswaded to change his side, or at least stand Neuter: Such may be found that go for Professors; that can hardly give an account what they hope for, or whom they hope in; yet Christians they must be thought, though they run before they know their Errand; or if they have some principles they go upon, they are so unsettled, that every wind blows them down, like loose Tylos from the house-top. Blind Zeal is soon put to a shameful retreat, while holy resolution, built on fast principles, lifts up its head, like a Rock in the midst of the waves. *Those that know their God, shall be strong and do exploits*; Dan. 11. 32. The Angel told *Daniel*, who were the men that would stand to their tackling, and bear up for God in that hour, both of temptation and persecution, which should be brought upon them by *Antiochus*; not all the Jews, some of them should be corrupt basely by flatteries, others scared by threats out of their Profession, only a few of

fixed principles, who knew their God whom they served, and were grounded in their Religion, these should be strong, and do Exploits; that is, to flatteries they should be incorruptible, and to power and force unconquerable.

Secondly, A sincere aim at the right end in our profession: Let a man be never so knowing in the things of Christ, if his aim be not right in his profession, that mans Principles will hang loose, he'll not venture much or far for Christ, no more, no further than he can save his own stake. A hypocrite may shew some metal at hand, some courage for a spurt in conquering some difficulties; but he'll shew himself a Jade at length. He that hath a false end in his Profession, will soon come to an end of his profession, when he is pinch'd on that Toe where his Corn is: I mean, called to deny that his naughty heart aimed at all this while, now his heart fails him, he can go no farther. O take heed of this squint-eye to our profit, pleasure, honour, or any thing beneath Christ and Heaven; for they will take away your heart, as the Prophet saith of *Wine and Women*: that is, our Love; and if our Love be taken away, there will be little courage left for Christ. How courageous was *Jehu* at first? and he tells the World, it is Zeal for God: But why doth his heart fail him then, before half his work be done? his heart was never right set; that very thing that stirred up his Zeal at first, at last quench'd and cow'd it, and that was his ambition; his desire of a Kingdom made him zealous against *Ahab's* House, to cut off them (who might in time juggle him besides the Throne) which done, and he quietly settled, he dare not go through-stitch with Gods Work, lest he should lose what he got, by provoking the People with a through Reformation. Like some Souldiers, when once they meet with a rich Booty at the sacking of some Town, are spoiled for fighting ever after.

CHAP. II.

Of the Saints strength, where it lies, and wherefore laid up in God.

THE second Branch of the words followeth, which contains a Cautionary Direction. Having exhorted the Saints at *Ephesus*, and in them all Believers, to a holy resolution and courage in their warfare; lest this should be mistaken, and beget in them an opinion of their own strength for the Battle, the Apostle leads them out of themselves for this strength, even to the Lord; *Be strong in the Lord*. From whence observe,

Doct. That the Christians strength lies in the Lord, not in himself. The strength of the General in other Hosts lies in his Troops; he flies, as a great Commander once said to his Souldi-

ers, upon their wings; if their Feathers be clipt, their power broken, he is lost: But in the Army of Saints, the strength of every Saint, yea, of the whole Host of Saints, lies in the Lord of Hosts. God can overcome his enemies without their hands; but they cannot so much as defend themselves without his Arm. 2. It is one of Gods Names, *the strength of Israel*, 1 Sam. 15. 19. He was the strength of *David's* heart, without him this valiant *Worthy* (that could, when held up in his Arms, defy him that defied an whole Army) behaves himself strangely for fear, at a word or two that dropt from the *Philistines* mouth. He was the strength of his hands, *He taught his fingers*

fingers to fight, and so he is the strength of all his Saints in their war against sin and Satan. Some propound a question, whether there be a sin committed in the World, in which Satan hath not a part? But if the question were, whether there be any holy action performed without the special assistance of God concurring? That is resolved, John 15. 5. *Without me you can do nothing.* Thinking strength of God, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves; to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* We Apostles, we Saints, that have habitual Grace, yet this lies like water at the bottom of a Well, which will not ascend with all our pumping, till God pour in his exciting Grace; and then it comes. To will is more than to think; to exert our will into action, more than both; these are of God, Phil. 2. 13. *It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.* He makes the heart new, and having made it fit for heavenly motion, setting every Wheel (as it were) in its right place, then he winds it up by his actuating Grace; and sets it on going, the thoughts to stir, the will to move, and make towards the holy Object presented; yet here the Character is set, and cannot ascend the Hill of action, till God puts his shoulder to the Wheel, Rom. 7. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* God is at the bottom of the Ladder, and at the top also, the Author and Finisher; yea, helping and lifting the Soul at every Round, in his ascent to any holy action. Well, now the Christian is set on work, how long will he keep close to it? Alas, poor Soul, no longer than he is held up by the same hand, that impowered him at first! He hath soon wrought out the strength received, and therefore to maintain the tenour of a holy course, there must be renewing strength from Heaven every moment, which David knew; and therefore when his heart was in as holy a frame as ever he felt it; and his people by their free-will-offering declared the same: yet even then he prays, that God would keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of his people, and establish their hearts to him; 1 Chron. 29. 18. He adored the mercy that made them willing, and then he implores his further Grace to strengthen them, and tie a knot, that these precious Pearls newly strung on their hearts, might not slip off. The Christian, when fullest of divine communications, is but a Glass without a Foot, he cannot stand, or hold what he hath received any longer, than God holds him in his strong hand. Therefore Christ, when bound for heaven, and ready to take his leave of his Children, bespeaks his Fathers care of them in his absence, John 17. *Father, Receive them:* as if he had said, They must not be left alone, they are poor shiftless Children, that can neither stand nor go without help: they will lose the Grace I

have given them, and fall into those temptations which I kept them from, while I was with them, if they be out of the eye or arms but one moment; and therefore, *Father, keep them.*

Again, Consider the Christian, as addressing himself to any duty of Gods Worship, still his strength is in the Lord. Would he pray? Where will he find matter for his Prayer? alas, he knows not what to pray for as he ought, Rom. 8. Let him alone, and he will soon pray himself into some temptation or other, and cry for that which were cruelty in God to give; and therefore God puts words in our mouths, *Take words with you and say,* Hos. 14. 2. Well now he hath words put into his mouth, alas, they will freeze in his very Lips, if he hath not some heart-heating affections to thaw the Tap: and where shall this fire be had? not a spark to be found on his own Hearth; except it be some strange site of natural desires, which will not serve: whence then must the fire come to thaw the Iciness of the heart, but from Heaven? The Spirit, he must stretch himself upon the Soul (as the Prophet on the Child) and then the Soul will come to some kindly warmth, and heavenly heat in his affections; the Spirit must groan, and then the Soul will groan; he helps us to these sighs and groans, which turn the Sails of Prayer: he dissolves the heart, and then it bursts out of the heart by gurgles of the lips by heavenly Rhetorick; out of the eyes, as from a Flood-gate with tears: yet further, now the Creature is enabled to wrestle with God in prayer; what will he get by all this? Suppose he be weak in grace, is he able to pray himself strong, or corruption weak? No, this is not to be found in prayer, as an act of the Creature: This drops from heaven also, Psal. 138. 2. *In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul.* David received it in duty, but had it not from his duty; but from his God. He did not pray himself strong, but God strengthened him in his Prayer. Well, cast your eye once more upon the Christian, as engaging in another Ordinance of hearing the Word preach'd. The Souls strength to hear the Word, is from God, he opens the heart to attend, Acts 16. 14. Yea, he opens the understanding of the Saint to receive the Word, so as to conceive what it meant. It is like Samson's Riddle, which we cannot unfold without his Heifer: He opens the womb of the Soul, to conceive by it, as the understanding to conceive of it, that the barren soul becomes a joyful Mother of Children. David sat for half a year under the publick Lectures of the Law, and the womb of his heart shut up, till Nathan comes, and God with him; and now is the time of life, he conceives presently; yea, and brings forth in the same day, falls presently into the bitter pangs of sorrow for his sins, which went not over till he had cast them forth in that sweet Psal. 41.

Why

Why should this one word work more, than all the former; but that God now struck in with his Word, which he did not before? He is therefore said to *teach his people to profit*, Isa. 48. 17. He sits in heaven that teacheth hearts. When Gods Spirit (who is the Head-master) shall call a soul from his Usher to himself, and say, Soul, you have not gone the way to thrive by hearing the Word; thus, and thus conceive of such a truth, improve such a promise; presently the eyes of his understanding open, and his heart burns within him, while he speaks to him. Thus you see the truth of this Point, that the Christians strength is in the Lord. Now we shall give some Demonstrations.

SECT. I.

Reas. 1. The first Reason may be taken from the nature of the Saints and their Grace, both are Creatures, they and their Grace also; now *in esse est deesse creatura*. 'Tis in the very nature of the creature to depend on God its Maker, both for being and operation. Can you conceive an Accident to be out of its Subject, whiteness out of the wall, or some other Subject? 'Tis as impossible that the creature should be, or act without strength from God: This, to be, act in and of himself, is so incommunicable a property of the Deity, that he cannot impart it to his creature: *God is; and there is none besides him*: when God made the world, it is said indeed he ended his work; that is, of Creation: he made no new species and kinds of creatures more; but to this day he hath not ended his work of Providence: *Hitherto my Father worketh*, saith Christ, John 5. 17. That is, in preserving and impowering what he hath made with strength to be and act, and therefore he is said to *hold our souls in life*. Works of Art, which man makes, when finished, may stand some time without the Workmans help, as the House, when the Carpenter that made it, is dead; but Gods works both of Nature and Grace, are never off his hand; and therefore as the Father is said to work hitherto for the preservation of the works of Nature, so the Son, to whom is committed the work of Redemption, he tells us *he worketh* also. Neither ended he his work, when he rose again, any other wayes than his Father did in the work of Creation. God made an end of making, so Christ made an end of purchasing Mercy, Grace and Glory for Believers by once dying; and as God rested at the end of the Creation, so he, when he had wrought eternal Redemption, and by himself purged our sins, *sate down on the Right Hand of the Majesty on high*, Heb. 1. 3. But he ceaseth not to work by his Intercession with God for us, and by his Spirit in us for God, whereby he upholds his Saints, their Graces, and Comforts in life, without which they would run to

ruine. Thus we see as Grace is a Creature, the Christian depends on God for his strength. But further,

Secondly, The Christians Grace is not only a Creature, but a weak Creature, conflicting with enemies stronger than it self, and therefore cannot keep the Field without an Auxiliary strength from Heaven. The weakest goes to the wall, if no succour comes in. Grace in this life is but weak; like a King in the Cradle, which gives advantage to Satan to carry on his Plots more strongly, to the disturbance of this young Kings Reign in the Soul; yea, he would soon make an end of the War in the ruine of the Believers Grace, did not Heaven take the Christian into protection. 'Tis true indeed, Grace where-ever it is, hath a Principle in it self, that makes it desire and endeavour to preserve it self according to its strength; but being over-powered, must perish, except assisted by God, as fire in green wood (which deads and damps the part kindled) will in time go out, except blown up, or more fire put to that little; so will grace in the heart. God brings his grace into the heart by Conquest: Now as in a conquered City, though some yield and become true Subjects to the Conqueror; yet others plot how they may shake off this yoke; and therefore it requires the same power to keep, as was to win it at first. The Christian hath an unregenerate part, that is discontented at this new change in the heart, and disdains as much to come under the sweet government of Christs Scepter, as the *Sodomites* that *Lor* should judge them. What, this Fellow, a *Stranger*, controll us? And Satan heads this mutinous Rout against the Christian: So that if God should not continually re-inforce this his new planted Colony in the heart, the very Natives (I mean Corruptions) that are left, would come out of their Dens and Holes where they lie lurking, and eat up the little Grace the holiest on Earth hath, it would be as Bread to these Devourers.

3. A third Demonstration may be taken from the grand Design which God propounds to himself in the Saints salvation; yea, in the transaction of it from first to last: and that is twofold.

First, God would bring his Saints to heaven in such a way, as might be most expressive of his dear Love and Mercy to them.

Secondly, He would so express his Love and Mercy to them, as might rebound back to him in the highest advance of his own Glory possible: Now how becoming this is to both, that Saints should have all their ability for every step they take in the way to Heaven, will soon appear.

1. This way of communicating strength to Saints, gives a double accent to Gods love and mercy.

First, It distills a sweetness into all that the Believer

Believer hath or doth, when he finds any comfort in his bosom, any enlargement of heart to duty, any support under temptations: To consider whence came all these, what friend sends them in? they come not from my own Cistern, or any Creatures: O 'tis my God that hath been here, and left this sweet perfume of comfort behind him in my bosom, my God, that hath (unawares to me) fill'd my sails with the gales of his Spirit, and brought me off the flats of my own deadness, where I lay aground. O 'tis his sweet Spirit that held my head, stayed my heart in such an Affliction and Temptation, or else I had gone away in a fainting fit of unbelief. How can this chuse but endear God to a gracious Soul? his succours coming so immediately from Heaven, which would be lost, if the Christian had any strength to help himself, (though this stock of strength came at first from God.) Which, think you, speaks more Love and Condescendence, for a Prince to give a Pension to a Favourite, on which he may live by his own care; or for this Prince to take the chief care upon himself, and come from day to day to this mans house, and look into his Cupboard, and see what provision he hath, what expence he is at, and so constantly to provide for the man from time to time? Possibly some proud spirit that likes to be his own man, or loves his means better than his Prince, would prefer the former; but one that is ambitious to have the heart and love of his Prince, would be raviht with the latter. Thus God doth with his Saints, the great God comes and looks into their Cupboard, and sees how they are laid in, and sends in accordingly, as he finds them. *Your heavenly Father knows you have need of these things, and you shall have them. He knows you need strength to pray, hear, suffer for him, and in ipsa hora dabitur.*

Secondly, This way of Gods dealing with his Saints, adds to the fulness and stability of their strength. Were the stock in our own hands, we should soon prove broken Merchants. God knows we are but leaking Vessels; when fullest, we could not hold it long; and therefore to make all sure, he sets us under the streamings forth of his strength, and a leaking Vessel under a Cock gets what it loseth. Thus we have our Leakage supplied continually. This was the provision God made for *Israel* in the Wilderness; *He clave the Rock, and the Rock followed them.* They had not only a draught at present, but it ran in a stream after them; so that you hear no more of their complaints for water; *This Rock was Christ.* Every Believer hath Christ at his back, following him with strength as he goes; for every condition and trial. One Flower with a Root is worth many in a Posie, which though sweet, yet do not grow, but wither as we wear them in our bosoms. Gods strength, as the Root, keeps our grace lively, without which, though as orient as *Adams* was, it would die.

2. The second design God hath in his Saints happiness, is, that he may so express his mercy and love to them, as may rebound back to him in the highest advance of his own glory therein, *Eph. 1.*

4. 12. which is fully attained in this way of empowering Saints, by a strength not of their own,

but of their God his sending, as they are put in expence. Had God given his Saints a stock of grace to have set up with, and left them to the improvement of it, he had been magnified indeed, because it was more than God did owe the Creature; but he had not been *omnified* as now, when not only the Christians first strength to close with Christ is from God; but he is beholden still to God for the exercise of that strength, in every action of his Christian course. As a Child that travels in his Fathers company, all is paid for, but his Father carries the Purse, not himself; so the Christians shot is discharged in every condition; but he cannot say, this I did, or that I suffered; but God wrought all in me, and for me. The very Comb of pride is cut here, no room for any self-exalting thoughts. The Christian cannot say, that I am a Saint is mercy; but being a Saint, that my Faith is strong, this is the Child of my own care and watchfulness. Alas, poor Christian! Who kept thine Eye waking, and stirred up thy care? Was not this the Off-spring of God, as well as thy Faith at first? No Saint shall say of Heaven when he comes there, This is Heaven which I have built by the power of my might. No, *Jerusalem above is a City, whose Builder and Maker is God.* Every grace, yea, degree of grace, is a stone in that Building, the Top-stone whereof is laid in Glory, where Saints shall more plainly see, how God was not only Founder to begin, but Benefactor also to finish the same. The glory of the work shall not be crumbled, and piece-meal'd out, some to God, and some to the Creature; but all entirely paid in to God, and he acknowledged all in all.

SECT. II.

Use 1. Is the Christians strength in the Lord, not in himself? Surely then the Christless person must needs be a poor impotent Creature, void of all strength and ability of doing any thing of it self towards its own salvation. If the Ship lanch'd, rigg'd, and with her Sails spread cannot stir, till the wind come fair, and fills them; much less can the Timber, that lies in the Carpenters Yard, hew and frame it self into a Ship. If the living Tree cannot grow except the Root communicates its Sap, much less can a dead rotten Stake in the Hedge, which hath no root, live of its own accord. In a word, if a Christian, that hath his spiritual life of Grace, cannot exercise this Life, without strength from above; then surely, one void of this new Life, dead in sins and trespasses, can never be able to beget this in himself, or concur to the production of it. The state of Unregeneracy is a state of Impotency, *what we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. 5. 6.* And as Christ found the Lump of mankind covered with the ruines of their lapsed Estate (no more able to raise themselves from under the weight of Gods wrath which lay upon them, than one buried under the Rubbish of a fallen house, is to free himself of that weight without help) so the Spirit finds sinners in as helpless a condition, as unable to repent, or believe on Christ for salvation, as they were of themselves to purchase

purchase it. Confounded therefore for ever be the Language of those Sons of Pride, who cry up the power of Nature, as if a man with his own Brick and Slime of natural Abilities were able to rear up such a Building, whose top may reach heaven it self. *It is not of him that willeth or runneth, but God that sheweth mercy,* Rom. 9. 16. God himself hath scattered such Babel-builders in the imaginations of their hearts, who raiseth this spiritual Temple in the souls of men, not by might, nor by a power of their own; but by his Spirit; that so Grace, Grace, might be proclaimed before it for ever. And therefore if any yet in their natural Estate would become wise to salvation, let them first become Fools in their own eyes, and renounce their carnal wisdom, which perceives not the things of God, and beg wisdom of God, who giveth, and upbraideth not. If any man would have strength to believe, let them become weak, and die to their own; for by strength shall no man prevail, 1 Sam. 2. 9.

Use 2. Secondly, Doth the Christians strength lie in God, not in himself? This may for ever keep

the Christian humble, when most enlarged in duty, most assisted in his Christian course. Remember, Christian, when thou hast thy best Suit on, who made it, who paid for it: Thy Grace, thy Comfort is neither the work of thy own hands, nor the price of thy own Desert; be not for shame proud of anothers cost. That assistance will not long stay, which becomes a Nurse to thy pride; thou are not Lord of that assistance thou hast. Thy Father is wise, who when he alloweth thee most for thy spiritual maintenance, even then keeps the Law in his own hands, and can soon curb thee, if thou growest wanton with his Grace. Walk humbly therefore before thy God, and husband well that strength thou hast, remembering that it is borrowed strength. *Nemo prodiget quod mendicat.* Who will waste what he begs? Or who will give that Beggar, that spends idly his Alms? When thou hast most, thou canst not be long from thy God his door. And how canst thou look him in the face for more, who hast imbezill'd what thou hast received?

CHAP. III.

Of acting our Faith on the Almighty Power of God.

THE third Branch followeth, which contains an encouraging Amplification annexed to the Exhortation, in these words; *And in the power of his might*, where a twofold enquiry is requisite for the Explication of the Phrase. First, What these words import, *The Power of his might*? Secondly, What it is to be strong in the power of his might?

For the first, *the Power of his might*: It is an Hebraism, and imports nothing but his mighty power, like that phrase, Eph. 1. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his Grace*, that is, to the praise of his glorious grace. And his mighty power imports no less than his Almighty Power; sometimes the Lord is stiled mighty and strong, as Psal. 24. 8. sometimes most mighty, sometimes Almighty; no less is meant in all than Gods Infinite Almighty Power.

For the second, To be strong in the mighty Power, or Power of the Lords might, implies these two Acts of Faith.

First, A settled firm perswasion, that the Lord is Almighty in power. *Be strong in the power of his might*; that is, be strongly rooted in your Faith, concerning this one foundation-truth, that God is Almighty.

Secondly, It implies a further Act of Faith, not only to believe that God is Almighty, but also that this Almighty power of God is engaged for its defence: so as to bear up in the midst of all trialls and temptations undauntedly, leaning on the Arm of God Almighty, as if it were his own strength; for that is the Apostles drift, as to beat us off from leaning on our own strength; so to encourage the Christian to make use of Gods Almighty power, as freely as if it were his own; whenever assaulted by Satan in any kind. As a man set upon by a Thief, stirs up all the force and strength he hath in his whole body to defend himself, and offend his Adversary;

so the Apostle bids the Christian *be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might*, that is, Soul, away to thy God, whose mighty power is all intended and devoted by God himself for thy succour and defence. Go strengthen and intrench thy self in it by a stedfast Faith, as that which shall be laid out to the utmost for thy good. From whence these two Notes I conceive will draw out the fatness of the words.

1. That it should be the Christians great care and endeavour in all temptations and trialls, to strengthen his Faith on the Almighty power of God.

2. The Christians duty and care is not only to believe that God is Almighty; but strongly by Faith to rest on this Almighty power of God, as engaged for his help and succour in all his trialls and temptations.

Doct. First, It should be the Christians great care in all temptations and trialls to strengthen his Faith on the almighty power of God. When God holds forth himself as an object of the souls trust and confidence in any great strait or undertaking; commonly this Attribute of his Almighty power is presented in the promise, as the surest hold-fast for faith to lay hold on. As a Father in rugged way, gives his Child his Arm to lay hold by; so doth God usually reach forth his Almighty power for his Saints, to exercise their Faith on. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, whose Faith God tried above most of his Saints before or since, for not one of those great things which were promised to them, did they live to see performed in their dayes; and how doth God make known himself to them for their support, but by displaying this Attribute, *Exod. 6. 3. I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty.* This was all they had to keep House with all their days: with which they lived comfortably, and died triumphantly, bequeathing the promise

mise to their Children, not doubting (because God Almighty had promised) of the performance. Thus *Iſa. 26.* where great mercies are promised to *Judah*, and a Song penn'd before-hand to be sung on that gaudy day of their salvation: yet because there was a sharp Winter of Captivity to come between the Promise, and the Spring-time of the Promise; therefore to keep their Faith alive in this space, the Prophet calls them up to act their Faith on God Almighty, ver. 4. *Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* So when his Saints are going into the Furnace of persecution, what now doth he direct their Faith to carry to prison, to stake with them, but his Almighty power? *1 Pet. 4. 19. Let them that suffer commit the keeping of their souls to him, as to a faithful Creator.* Creator is a name of Almighty power. We shall now give some Reasons of the Point.

Reas. 1. First, Because it is no easie work to make use of this truth (how plain and clear soever it now appears) in great plunges of temptation, that God is Almighty; to vindicate this Name of God from those evil reports, which Satan and carnal Reason raise against it, requires a strong Faith indeed. I confess this principle is a piece of Natural Divinity; That light which finds out a Deity, will evince, (if followed close) this God to be Almighty; yet in a carnal heart, it is like a rusty Sword, hardly drawn out of the Scabbard, and so of little or no use. Such truths are so imprisoned in natural Conscience, that they seldom get a fair hearing in the sinners bosom, till God gives them a Gaol-delivery, and brings them out of their house of bondage, where they are shut up in unrighteousness, with a high hand of his convincing Spirit. Then, and not till then, the soul will believe God is Holy, Merciful, Almighty; nay, some of Gods peculiar people, and not the meanest for Grace amongst them, have had their Faith for a time set in this slough, much ado to get over those difficulties & improbabilities, which Sense and Reason have objected; so as to rely on the Almighty power of God with a Notwithstanding. *Moses* himself, a star of the first magnitude for grace, yet see how his Faith blinks and twinkles, till he wades out of the temptation! *Num. 11. 21. The people amongst whom I am are six hundred thousand, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole Month, shall the Flocks and the Herds be slain for them to suffice them?* This holy man had lost the sight, for a time, of the Almighty power of God; and now he is projecting how this should be done: As if he had said in plain terms, How can this be accomplished? for so God interprets his Reasoning, ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lords hand waxed short?* So *Mary*, *John 11. 32. Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died.* And her Sister *Martha*, v. 39. *Lord, by this time he stinketh.* Both gracious women, yet both betrayed the weakness of their Faith on the Almighty Power of Christ, one limiting him to place; *If thou hadst been here, he had not died*; as if Christ could not have saved his life absent, as well as present; sent his health to him, as well as brought it with him. The other to time, *Now he stinketh*; as if Christ had brought his Physick too late, and the Grave would not deliver up its

Prisoner at Christs command. And hast thou such an high opinion of thy self, Christian, that thy faith needs not thy utmost care and endeavour for further establishment on the Almighty Power of God, when thou see'st such as these dash their foot against this kind of temptation?

The second Reason may be taken from the absolute necessity of this Act of Faith above others, to support the Christian in the hour of temptation. All the Christians strength and comfort is fetched without doors, and he hath none to send on his Errand but Faith: This goes to Heaven, and knocks God up; as he in the Parable, his Neighbour at midnight for bread: Therefore when Faith fails, and the soul hath none to go to Market for supplies, there must needs be a poor house kept in the mean time. Now Faith is never quite laid up, till the soul denies, or at least questions the power of God. Indeed, when the Christian disputes the will of God, whispering within its own bosom, Will he pardon? Will he save? This may make Faith go haltingly to the Throne of Grace, but not knock the soul off from seeking the face of God: even then Faith on the Power of God, will bear it company thither: *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, *Matth. 8. 2.* *If thou wilt, thou canst pardon, thou canst purge*: But when the soul concludes he cannot pardon, cannot save, this shoots Faith to the heart, so that the soul falls at the foot of Satan, not able more to resist. Now it grows listless to duty, indifferent whether it pray or not; as one that sees the Well dry, breaks or throws away his Pitcher.

Thirdly, Because God is very tender of this flower of his Crown, this part of his Name: Indeed he cannot spell it right, and leave out this Letter; for that is Gods Name, whereby he is known from all his Creatures. Now man may be called wise, merciful, mighty: God only All-wise, All-merciful, All-mighty; so that when we leave out this Syllable All, we nick-name God, and call him by his Creatures name, which he will not answer to. Now the tenderness that God shews to this Prerogative of his, appears in three Particulars.

First, In the strict command he lays on his people, to give him the glory of his power, *Iſa. 8. 12, 13. Fear ye not their fear, but sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself*: that is, in this sad posture of your Affairs; when your enemies associate, and you seem a lost people to the eye of Reason, not able to contest with such united powers which beset you on every side: Now I charge you sanctify me in giving me the Glory of my Almighty Power; believe that your God is able of himself without any other, to defend you, and destroy them.

Secondly, In his severity to his dearest Children, when they stagger in their Faith, and come not off roundly (without reasoning and disputing the case) to rely on his Almighty power: *Zacharias* did but ask the Angel, *How shall I know this, because I am an old man, and my wife stricken in years?* yet for bewraying therein his unbelief, had a sign indeed given him, but such a one as did not only strengthen his Faith, but severely punish his unbelief: for he was struck dumb upon the place. God loves his Children should believe his Word, not dispute

his Power : so true is that of *Luther*, *Deus amat curristas non queristas*. That which gave accent to *Abrahams Faith*, *Rom. 4. 21.* was, that he was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform.

Thirdly, In the way God takes of giving his choicest mercies, and greatest salvation to his people, wherein he lays the Scene of his Providence so, that when he hath done, it may be said Almighty power was here. And therefore God commonly puts down those means and second causes, which if they stood about his work, would blind and hinder the full prospect thereof in effecting the same, *2 Cor. 1. 9.* We received the sentence of death in our selves, that we might not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead. Christ staid while *Lazarus* was dead, that he might draw the eyes of their Faith more singly to look on his power, by raising his dead friend, rather than curing him being sick, which would not have carried so full a conviction of Almightiness in it. Yea, he suffers a contrary power many times to arise in the very juncture of time, when he intends the mercy to his people, that he may rear up the more magnificent pillar of remembrance to

his own power, in the ruine of that which contests with him. Had God brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* in the time of those Kings which knew *Joseph*, most likely they might have had a friendly departure and an easie deliverance ; but God reserves this for the Reign of that proud *Pharaoh*, who shall cruelly oppress them, and venture his Kingdom, but he will satisfy his Lust upon them. And why must this be the time ? but that God would bring them forth with a stretched out Arm : The magnifying of his power was Gods great design, *Exod. 9. 16.* In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, to shew in thee my power, and that my Name may be declared throughout the Earth.

Fourthly, In the prevalency which an Argument that is pressed from his Almighty power hath with God. It was the last String *Moses* had to his Bow, when he begged the life of *Israel*, *Numb. 14. 16.* The Nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying ; because the Lord was not able, &c. And *v. 17.* Let the Power of my Lord be great ; and with this he hath their pardon thrown him.

The Application of this point will fall in under the next, which is,

CHAP. IV.

Of acting our Faith on the Almighty Power of God, as engaged for our help.

Doct. **T**HAT it is the Saints duty, and should be their care, not only to believe God Almighty ; but also strongly to believe that this Almighty power of God is theirs (that is, engaged to their defence and help) so as to make use of it in all straits and temptations.

SECT. I.

First, I shall prove that the Almighty power of God is engaged for the Christians defence ; with the Grounds of it.

Secondly, Why the Christian should strongly act his Faith on this.

First, The Almighty power of God is engaged for the Saints defence ; God brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* with an high hand ; but did he set them down on the other side the Red Sea, to find and force their way to *Canaan*, by their own policy or power ? when he had opened the Iron Gate of their House of Bondage, and brought them into the open Fields, did he vanish as the Angel from *Peter*, when out of Prison ? No, as man carries his Son, so the Lord bare them in all the way they went, *Deut. 1. 31.* This doth lively set forth the Saints March to heaven : God brings a soul out of spiritual *Egypt* by his converting grace ; that is, the day of his power, wherein he makes the soul willing to come out of Satans Clutches. Now when the Saint is upon his march, all the Countrey riseth upon him. How shall this poor Creature pass the Pikes, and get safely by all his Enemies borders ? God himself infolds him in the Arm of his Everlasting strength. We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* The power of God is that shoulder, on which

Christ carries his sheep home, rejoycing all the way he goes, *Luke 15. 5.* These Everlasting Arms of his strength are those Eagles wings, upon which the Saints are both tenderly and securely conveyed to Glory, *Exod. 19. 4.* There is a fivefold Tie or Engagement that lies upon Gods power, to be the Saints Life-guard.

First, The near Relation he hath to his Saints, they are his own dear Children ; every one takes care of his own ; the silly Hen, how doth she busle and bestir her self to gather her Brood under her wing when the Kite appears ? No care like that which Nature teacheth. How much more will God, who is the Father of such dispositions in his Creature, stir up his whole strength to defend his Children ? He said, They are my people, so he became their Saviour, *Isa. 33. 8.* As if God had said, Shall I sit still with my hand in my bosom, while my own people are thus misused before my face ? I cannot bear it. The Mother as she sits in her House, hears one shriek, and knows the voice, cries out, O 'tis my Child, away she throws all, and runs to him. Thus God takes the Alarm of his Childrens Cry, I heard *Ephraim bemoaning himself*, faith the Lord ; his Cry pierced his Ear, and his Ear affected his Bowels, and his Bowels called up his Power to the rescue of him.

Secondly, The dear Love he beareth to his Saints engageth his Power. He that hath Gods Heart, cannot want his Arm. Love in the Creature commands all the other affections, sets all the powers of the whole man on work ; thus in God, Love sets all his other Attributes on work, when God once pitch'd his thoughts of doing good to lost man, then Wisdom fell on projecting the way, Almighty Power that

that undertook to raise the Fabrick according to Wifdoms Model. All are ready to affect what God faith he likes. Now the believing Soul is an object of Gods choicest Love, even the same, with which he loves his Son, *John 17. 26.*

First, God loves the Believer as the birth of his everlasting counsel; when a soul believes, then Gods eternal purpose and counsel concerning him (whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, and with whom his thoughts went so long big) brings forth. And how much God needs love that Creature, whom he carried so long in the womb of his eternal purpose? this goodly Fabrick of Heaven and Earth had not been built, but as a stage whereon he would in time act what he decreed in Heaven of old, concerning the saving of thee, and a few more his Elect; and therefore according to the same rate of delight, with which God pleased and entertained himself in the thoughts of this before the World was, must he needs rejoice over the soul now believing with Love and Complacency unconceivable; and God having brought his Counsel thus far towards its issue, surely will raise all the power he hath, rather than be disappointed of his Glory, within a few steps of home; I mean, his whole design in the Believers salvation; the Lord who hath chosen his Saints (as Christ prays for *Joshua* their Representative) will rebuke Satan and all their Enemies, *Zech. 3.*

Secondly, God loves his Saints as the purchase of his Sons blood, they cost him dear; and that which is so hardly got, shall not be easily lost. He that was willing to expend his Sons blood to gain them, will not deny his Power to keep them.

Thirdly, God loves the Saints for their likeness to himself, so that if he loves himself, he cannot but love himself appearing in them; and as he loves himself in them, so he defends himself in defending them. What is it in a Saint that enrageth Hell, but the Image of God, without which the War would soon be at an end? It is the hatred the Panther hath to man that makes him fly at his picture: *For thy sake are we slain all the day long*: and if the quarrel be Gods, surely the Saint shall not go forth to War at his own cost.

Fourthly, The Covenant engageth Gods Almighty power, *Gen. 17. 1. I am the Almighty God, walk before me.* There is a League offensive and defensive between God and his Saints, he gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for them, *1 Chron. 17. 24. The Lord of Hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.* God doth not parcel himself out by Retail, but gives his Saints leave to challenge whatever a God hath as theirs; and let him, whoever he is, sit in Gods Throne, and take away his Crown, that can fasten any Untruth on the Holy One; as his Name is, so is his Nature, a God keeping Covenant for ever. The Promises stand as the Mountains about *Jerusalem*, never to be removed, the weak as well as the strong Christian is within this Line of Communication. Were Saints to fight it out in open Field by the strength of their own Grace, then the strong were more likely to stand, and the weak to fall in Battel; but both Castled in the Covenant are alike safe.

Fourthly, The Saints dependance on God, and expectation from God in all their straits, oblige this power for their succor: whither doth a gracious soul fly in any want or danger from Sin, Satan, or his Instruments, but to his God? as naturally as the Coney to her Burrough, *Psal. 56. 3. At what time I am afraid, faith David, I will trust in thee*: He tells God he will make bold of his House to step into, when taken in any storm; and doth not question his Welcom. Thus when *Saul* hunted him, he left a City of Gates and Bars to trust God in open Field. Indeed all the Saints are taught the same Lesson, to renounce their own strength, and rely on the power of God; their own policy, and cast themselves on the wisdom of God; their own righteousness, and expect all from the pure mercy of God in Christ; which act of Faith is so pleasing to God, that such a soul shall never be ashamed, *Psal. 9. 18. The expectation of the poor shall not perish.* A Heathen could say, when a Bird (scared by a Hawk) flew into his bosom, I will not betray thee unto thy Enemy, seeing thou comest for Sanctuary unto me. How much less will God yield up a soul unto its enemy, when it takes Sanctuary in his Name, saying, Lord, I am hunted with such a temptation, dogg'd with such a lust, either thou must pardon it, or I am damn'd; mortifie it, or I shall be a slave to it; take me into the bosom of thy Love for Christs sake; Castle me in the Arms of thy everlasting strength; it is in thy power to save me from, or give me up into the hands of my enemy; I have no confidence in myself or any other: into thy hands I commit my cause, my self, and rely on thee: This dependance of a soul undoubtedly will awaken the Almighty power of God, for such an ones defence: He hath sworn the greatest Oath that can come out of his blessed lips, even by himself, that such as thus fly for refuge to hope in him, shall have strong consolation, *Heb. 6. 17.* This indeed may give the Saint the greater boldness of faith to expect kind entertainment, when he repairs to God for refuge, because he cannot come before he is lookt for, God having set up his Name and Promises as a strong Tower, both calls his people into these Chambers, and expects they should betake themselves thither.

Fifthly, Christs presence and employment in Heaven lays a strong Engagement on God to bring his whole Force and Power into the Field upon all occasions for his Saints defence; one special end of his Journey to Heaven, and abode there, is, that he might (as the Saints Solicitor) be ever interceding for such supplies and succours of his Father, as their exigencies call for; and the more to assure us of the same before he went, he did (as it were) tell us, what heads he meant to go upon in his Intercession, when he should come there; one of which was this, That his Father should keep his Children while they were to stay in the world, from the evil thereof, *John 17. 15.* Neither doth Christ take upon him this work of his own head, but hath the same appointment of his Father, for what he now prays in Heaven, as he had for what he suffered on Earth: He that ordained him a Priest to die for sinners, did not then strip him of his Priestly garments (as *Aaron*) but appoints him to ascend in them to heaven, where he

he sits a Priest for ever by Gods Oath. And this Office of Intercession was erected purely in mercy to Believers, that they might have full content given them for the performance of all that God had promised; so that Jesus Christ lies Leiger at Court as our Emballador, to see all carried fairly between God and us according to agreement: And if Christ follow his business close, and be faithful in his place to Believers, all is well: and doth it not behove him to be so, who intercedes for such dear Relations? Suppose a Kings Son should get out of a besieged City, where he hath left his Wife and Children (whom he loves as his own soul) and these all ready to die by Sword or Famine, if supply come not the sooner; could this Prince, when arrived at his Fathers house, please himself with the delights of the Court, and forget the distress of his Family? Or rather would he not come post to his Father (having their cries and groans always in his ears) and before he eat or drink, do his Errand to his Father, and entreat him if ever he lov'd him, that he would send all the force of his Kingdom to raise the Siege, rather than any of his dear Relations should perish? Surely (Sirs) though Christ be in the top of his preferment, and out of the storm in regard of his own person, yet his Children left behind in the midst of sins, Satans, and the Worlds batteries, are in his heart, and shall not be forgotten a moment by him. The care he takes in our business, appeared in the speedy dispatch he made of his Spirit to his Apostles supply, when he ascended, which almost as he was warm in his Seat, at his Fathers Right hand, he sent, to the incomparable comfort of his Apostles and us, that to this day, yea, to the end of the world do, or shall believe on him.

SECT. II.

The second Branch of the point follows: That Saints should eye this power of God as engaged for them; and press it home upon their souls, till they silence all doubts and fears about the matter; which is the importance of this Exhortation: *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might.* Fortify and entrench your souls within the breast-work of this Attribute of Gods mighty power made over to you by God himself.

First, It is the end as of all Promises to be security to our Faith; so of those in particular, where his Almighty power is expressly engaged, that we may count this Attribute our portion, and reap the comfort it yields as freely, as one may the Crop of his own Field, *Walk before me*, saith God to Abraham, *I am God Almighty*; set on this as thy portion, and live upon it: The Apostle, *Heb. 11. 6.* teacheth us what use to make of promises, *v. 3. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*; there is the promise; and the Inference, which he teacheth us to draw by faith from this, follows, *v. 6. So we may boldly say, the Lord is my Helper.* We, that is, every Believer may boldly say, that is, we may conclude God will help: not sneakingly, timorously, perhaps he will; but we may boldly assert it in the face of Men and Devils, because he that is Almighty hath said it. Now for a Christian not to strengthen his Faith on this

incomparably sweet Attribute; but to sit down with a few weak unsettled hopes, when he may, yea, ought to be strong in the Faith of such Promises; what is it but to undervalue the blessing of such promises? as if one should promise another House and Land, and bid him make them as sure to himself as the Law can bind, and he should take no care to effect this, would it not be interpreted as a slighting of his Friends kindness? Is it a small matter that God passeth over his Almighty power by promise to us, and bids us make it as sure to our selves as we can by faith, and we neglect this, leaving the writings of the promises unsealed on our hearts?

Secondly, Our Obedience and comfort are strong or weak, as our Faith is on this Principle.

First, Our Obedience, that being a Child of Faith, partakes of its Parents strength or weakness; Abraham being strong in faith, what an Heroick Act of Obedience did he perform in offering up his Son? his faith being well set on the power of God, he carries that without staggering, which would have laid a weak faith on the ground. No act of Faith more strengthens for Duty, than that which eyes Gods Almighty power engaged for its assistance. *Go in this thy might*, said God to Gideon, *have not I called thee?* as if he had said, Can I not, will I not carry thee through thy work? Away goes Gideon in the Faith of this, and doth wonders. This brought the righteous man from the East of Gods Foot, though he knew not whither he went, yet he knew with whom he went, God Almighty. But take a soul not perswaded of this, how uneven and unstable is he in this obediential course? Every threat from man, if mighty, dismays him, because his Faith is not fixt on the Almighty; and therefore sometimes he will shift off a Duty to comply with man, and betray his trust into the hands of a sorry Creature, because he hath fleshly eyes to behold the power of man, but wants a spiritual eye to see God at his back, to protect him with his Almighty power; which were his eyes open to see, he would not be so rooted in his thoughts at the approach of a weak Creature: *Should such a man as I flee?* saith good Nehemiah, *Nehem. 6. 11.* He was newly come from the Throne of Grace, where he had called in the help of the Almighty, *v. 9. O God, strengthen my hands.* And truly now he will rather die upon the place, than disparage his God with a dishonourable Retreat.

Secondly, The Christians Comfort increaseth or wanes, as the Aspect of his Faith is to the power of God. Let the soul question that, or his interest in it, and his joy gusheth out, even as blood out of a broken Vein: It is true, a soul may scramble to Heaven with much ado, by a Faith of Recumbency, relying on God as able to save, without this perswasion of its interest in God; but such a soul goes with a scant side-wind, or like a Ship whose Masts are laid by the Board, exposed to Wind and Weather, if others better appointed did not tow it along with them. Many Fears like Waves ever and anon cover such a soul, that it is more under water than above; whereas one that sees it self folded in the Arms of Almighty Power, O how such a soul goes mounting afore the Wind, with her Sails fill'd with Joy and Peace!

Peace ! Let affliction come, Storms arise, this blessed soul knows where it shall land and be welcome. The Name of God is his Harbour, where he puts in as boldly, as a man steps into his own house, when taken in a shower. He hears God calling him into this, and other his Attributes, as *Chambers* taken up for him, *Isa. 26. Come my people, enter into thy Chambers.* God calls them his, and it were foolish modesty not to own what God gives, *Isa. 45. 24. Surely shall a man say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength,* that is, I have righteousness in Gods righteousness, strength in his strength, so that in this respect Christ can no more say that his strength is his own, and not the Believers, than the husband can say, my body is my own, and not my wives. A Soul persuaded of this, may sing merrily with the sharpest thorn at its breast ; *so David, Psal. 57. 7. My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.* What makes him so merry in so sad a place as the Cave where now he was? He will tell you, *v. 1.* where you have him nestling himself under the shadow of Gods wings, and now well may he sing care and fear away. A soul thus provided, may lie at ease on a hard bed. Do you not think they sleep as soundly who dwell on *London-Bridge*, as they who live at *White-hall* or *Cheap-side*, knowing the waves that roar under them cannot hurt them? Even so may the Saints rest quietly over the floods of death it self, and fear no ill.

SECT. III.

Is the Almighty Power of God engaged for the Saints defence? surely then they will have a hard pull (the Saints enemies I mean) who meddle with them that are so far above their match. The Devil was so cunning, that he would have *Job* out of his trench, his Hedge down, before he would fall on ; but so desperate are men, they will try the Field with the Saints, though incircled with the Almighty power of God. What folly were it to attempt, or sit down before such a City, which cannot be blockt up so as no relief can get in ? The way to Heaven cannot. In the Churches straightest siege, *there is a River which shall make glad the City of God,* with seasonable succours from Heaven. The Saints fresh-springs are all from God ; and it is as feasible for sorry man to stop the water-courses of the Clouds, as to dam up those streams, which invisibly glide like veins of Water in the Earth, from the Fountain-head of his Mercy, into the bosom of his People. The *Egyptians* thought they had *Israel* in a Trap, when they saw them march into such a Nook by the Sea-side ; *They are entangled, they are entangled ;* and truly so they had been irrecoverably, had not that Almighty Power which led them on, engaged to bring them off with honour and safety. Well when they are out of this danger, behold, they are in a Wilderness, where nothing is to be had for back and belly, and yet here they shall live forty years, without Trade or Tillage, without begging or robbing of any of the Neighbour-Nations, they shall not be beholden to them for a Penny in their way : What cannot Almighty power do to provide for his people? what can it not do to protect them against the

power and wrath of their enemies? Almighty power stood between the *Israelites* and the *Egyptians*; so that (poor creatures) they could not so much as come to see their Enemy : God sets up a dark Cloud as a blind before their eyes ; and all the while, his eye through the Cloud is looking them into disorder and confusion : And is the Almighty grown weaker now adays, or his Enemies stronger, that they promise themselves better success? No, neither; but men are blinder than the Saints Enemies of old, who sometimes have fled at the appearance of God among his people, crying out, *Let us flee, for the Lord fighteth for them.* Whereas there be many now adays will rather give the honour of their discomfitures to Satan himself, than acknowledge God in the business ; more ready to say the Devil fought against them, than God. O you that have not yet worn off the impressions which the almighty power of God hath at any time made upon your spirits, beware of having any thing to do with this Generation of men, whoever they are ; Come not near their *Tabernacle*, cast not thy Lot in amongst them, who are enemies to the Saints of the most High ; for they are men devoted to destruction. God so loves his Saints, that he makes nothing to give *whole Nations* for their ransom. He ript open the very Womb of *Egypt*, to save the Life of *Israel* his Child, *Isa. 43. 3.*

Use 2. Secondly, This shews the dismal, deplorable condition of all you, who are yet in a Christless state ; you have seen a rich Mine open'd, but not a penny of this Treasure comes to your share ; a Truth laden with incomparable comfort, but it is bound for another Coast, it belongs to the Saints ; into whose bosom this truth unlaces all her comfort : see God shutting the door upon you, when he sets his Children to feast themselves with such dainties, *Isa. 65. 13. My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry : my servants shall drink ; but ye shall be thirsty.* God hath his set number, which he provides for ; he knows how many he hath in his Family. These, and no more shall sit down. One chief Dish at the Saints Board, is the almighty power of God ; this was set before *Abraham*, and stands before all his Saints, that they may eat to fulness of comfort on it : *But thou shalt be hungry.* He is Almighty to pardon ; but he will not use it for thee an impenitent sinner ; thou hast not a Friend on the Bench, not an Attribute in all Gods Name will speak for thee : Mercy it self will sit and vote with the rest of its Fellow-Attributes for thy damnation. God is able to save and help in a time of need ; but upon what acquaintance is it that thou art so bold with God, as to expect his saving Arm to be stretcht forth for thee? Though a man will rise at Midnight to let in a Child that cries and knocks at his door, yet he will not take so much pains for a Dog, that lies howling there. This presents thy condition, sinner, sad enough, yet this is to tell thy story fairest ; for that almighty power of God which is engaged for the Believers salvation, is as deeply obliged to bring thee to thy execution and damnation. What greater tie than an Oath? God himself is under an oath to be the destruction of every impenitent soul. That Oath which God swore in his

his wrath against the unbelieving *Israelites*, that they should not enter into his rest, concerns every Unbeliever to the end of the world. In the Name of God consider, were it but the Oath of a man, or a company of men, that like those in the *Acts*, should swear to be the death of such an one, and thou wert the man, would it not fill thee with fear and trembling night and day, and take away the quiet of thy life, till they were made friends? What then are their pillows stufft with, who can sleep so soundly without any horror or amazement, though they be told, that the Almighty God is under an Oath of damning their Body and Soul, without timely repentance? O bethink your selves sinners, is it wisdom, or valour to refuse terms of mercy from Gods hands, whose almighty power if rejected, will soon bring you into the hands of Justice? and how fearful a thing that is, to fall into the hands of Almighty God, no tongue can express, no not they who feel the weight of it.

Use 3. *Thirdly*, This speaks to you, that are Saints indeed, Be strong in the Faith of this truth, make it an Article of your Creed; with the same Faith that you believe there is a God, believe also this Gods almighty power is thy sure Friend, and then improve it to thy best advantage. As,

First, In Agonies of Conscience that arise from the greatness of thy sins, fly for refuge into the almighty power of God. Truly Sirs, when a mans sins are displayed in all their bloody colours, and spread forth in their killing aggravations, and the eye of Conscience awakened to behold them through the multiplying, or magnifying-glass of a temptation, they must needs surprize the Creature with horror and amazement; till the soul can say with the Prophet; for all this huge Host, *There is yet more with me than against me*. One Almighty is more than many Mighties. All these mighty sins and Devils, make not an almighty sin, or an almighty Devil. Oppose to all the hideous Charges brought against thee by them, this only Attribute. As the French Ambassador once silenced the Spaniards pride in repeating his Masters many Titles, with one that drowned them all. God himself, *Hos. 11. 9*. when he had aggravated his Peoples sins to the height, then to shew what a God can do, breaks out into a sweet Promise: *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, and why not? I am God, and not man. I will shew the Almightyness of my Mercy*. Something like our usual phrase, when a Child or a Woman strikes us, I am a Man, and not a Child, or Woman, therefore I will not strike again. The very considering God to be God, supposeth him Almighty to pardon, as well as to avenge, and this is some relief; but then to consider it is almighty power in Bond and Covenant to pardon, this is more: As none can bind God but himself, so none can break the bond himself makes: and are they not his own words, that *he will abundantly pardon*? *Isa. 55. 7*. He will multiply to pardon, as if he had said, I'll drop mercy with your sin, and spend all I have, rather than let it be said my good is overcome of your evil. It fares with the gracious soul in this case, as with a Captain, that yields his Castle upon gracious terms of having his Life spared; and he safely con-

veyed to his house, there to be settled peaceably in his Estate and Possession, for all which he hath the Generals Hand and Seal: on which he marcheth forth, but the rude Souldiers assault him, and put him in fear of his Life, he appeals to the General, (whose honour now is engaged for him) and is presently relieved, and his enemies punished: Thou maist poor soul, when accused by Satan, molested by his terrors say, *It is God that justifies*; I have his hand to it, that I should have my life given me as soon as I laid down my arms, and submitted to him, which I desire to do; behold, the gates of my heart are open to let the Prince of Peace in, and is not the Almighty able to perform his promise? I commit my self to him as unto a faithful Creator.

Secondly, Improve this almighty power of God, and thy interest therein, in temptations to sin, when thou art over-powered, and fleest before the face of thy strong corruption, or fearest thou shalt one day fall by it, make bold to take hold of this Attribute, and re-inforce thy self from it again to resist, and in resisting, to believe a timely victory over it. The Almighty God stands in sight of thee while thou art in the Valley fighting, and staies but for a Call from thee when distressed in battel, and then he will come to thy rescue: *Jehoshaphat* cried, when in the throng of his Enemies, and the Lord helped him; much more maist thou promise thy self his succour in thy soul combates: Betake thy self to the Throne of Grace with that Promise, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; and before thou urgest it, (the more to help thy Faith) comfort thy self with this, that though this word Almighty is not exprest, yet it is implied in this and every promise, and thou maist without adding a tittle to the Word of God, read it in thy Soul; sin shall not have dominion over you, saith the Almighty God; for this and all his Attributes are the constant Seal to all his Promises. Now soul, put the Bond in suit, fear not the recovery, 'tis debt, and so due: He is able whom thou suest, and so there is no fear of losing the Charge of the Suit; and he that was so gracious to bind himself when he was free, will be so faithful (being able) to perform now he is bound; only while thou expectest the performance of the promise, and the assistance of this almighty power against thy Corruptions, take heed that thou keep under the shadow of this Attribute, and condition of this Promise, *Psal. 91. 1*. The shadow will not cool except in it; what good to have the shadow, though of a mighty Rock, when we sit in the open Sun? To have almighty power engaged for us, and we to throw our selves out of the protection thereof by bold Salleys into the mouth of temptation? The Saints falls have been, when they run out of their Trench and Hold; for like the Conies, they are a weak people in themselves, and their strength lies in the Rock of Gods Almightyness, which is their habitation.

Thirdly, Christian, improve this, when oppressed with the weight of any Duty and Service, which in thy place and calling lies upon thee. Perhaps thou findest the Duty of thy Calling too heavy for thy weak shoulders, make bold by Faith to lay the heaviest end of thy burden on Gods shoulder,

der, which is thine (if a Believer) as sure as God can make it by promise. When at any time thou art sick of thy work, and ready to think with *Jonas* to run from it; encourage thy self with that of God to *Gideon*, whom he called from the Flail to thresh the Mountains. Go in this thy might, hath not God called thee? Fall to the work God sets thee about, and thou engagest his strength for thee. The way of the Lord is strength. Run from thy work, and thou engagest Gods strength against thee, he'll send some storm or other after thee to bring home his Runaway servant. How oft hath the Coward been kill'd in a Ditch, or under some Hedge, when the Valiant Souldier that stood his ground and kept his place, got off with safety and honour? Art thou called to suffer? Flinch not because thou art afraid thou shalt never be able to bear the Cross; God can lay it so even, thou shalt not feel it; though thou shouldst find no succour till thou comest to the Prison door, yea, till thou hast one foot on the Ladder, or thy Neck on the Block, despair not. In the Mount will the Lord be seen. And in that hour he can give thee such a Look of his sweet Face, as shall make the blood come in the ghastly face of a cruel Death, and appear lovely in thy eye for his sake. He can give thee so much Comfort in hand, as thou shalt acknowledge God is aforehand with thee, for all the shame and pain thou canst endure for him: And if it should not amount to this, yet so much as will bear all thy Charges thou canst be put to in the way, lies ready told in that promise, 1 Cor. 10. 13. Thou shalt have it at sight, and this may satisfy a Christian, especially if he considers, though he doth not carry so much of Heavens joy about him to Heaven as others, yet he shall meet it as soon as he comes to his Fathers

house, where it is reserved for him. In a word, Christian, rely upon thy God, and make thy daily applications to the Throne of Grace, for continual supplies of strength, you little think how kindly he takes it, that you will make use of him, the oftner the better, and the more you come for, the more welcome; else why would Christ have told his Disciples, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing*; but to express his large heart in giving, loth to put his hand to his Purse for a little, and therefore by a familiar kind of Rhetorick puts them to rise higher in asking, as *Naaman* when *Gebazi* asks one Talent, entreats him to take two: such a bountiful heart thy God hath, while thou art asking a little peace and joy, he bids thee open thy mouth wide, and he'll fill it. Go and ransack thy heart, Christian, from one end to the other, find out thy wants, acquaint thy self with all thy weaknesses, and set them before the Almighty, as the Widow her empty Vessels before the Prophet; hadst thou more than thou canst bring, thou mightst have them all fill'd. God hath strength enough to give, but he hath no strength to deny, here the Almighty himself (with reverence be it spoken) is weak; even a Child, the weakest in Grace of his Family, that can but say Father, is able to overcome him; and therefore let not the weakness of thy Faith discourage thee. No greater motive to the bowels of mercy to stir up almighty power to relieve thee, than thy weakness, when pleaded in the sense of it. The pale face and thin cheeks (I hope) move more with us, than the canting language of a stout sturdy Beggar. Thus that soul that comes laden in the sense of his weak Faith, Love, Patience, the very weakness of them carries an Argument along with them for succour.

CHAP. V.

Wherein is answered a Grand Objection, that some disconsolate Souls may raise against the former Discourse.

Object. **O** But, faith some disconsolate Christian, I have pray'd again and again for strength against such a corruption, and to this day my hands are weak, and these sons of *Zeruah* are so strong, that I am ready to say, all the Preachers do but flatter me, that do pour their Oil of Comfort upon my head, and tell me I shall at last get the Conquest of these mine Enemies, and see that joyful day wherein with *David* I shall sing to the Lord, for delivering me out of the hands of all mine enemies. I have prayed for strength for such a Duty; and find it come off as weakly and dead-heartedly as before. If God be with me by his mighty power to help me, why then is all this befallen me?

Ans. 1. First, Look once again, poor heart, into thine own bosom, and see whether thou findest not some strength sent in to thee, which thou didst overlook before; this may be, yea, is very ordinary in this case, when God answers our Prayer not in the Letter, or when the thing it self is sent, but it comes in at the Back-door, while we are expecting it at the Fore; and truly thus the Friend

thou art looking for, may be in thine house, and thou not know it. Is not this thy case, poor soul? Thou hast been praying for strength against such a Lust, and now thou wouldst have God presently put forth his power to knock it on the head, and lay it for dead, that it should never stir more in thy bosom: Is not this the door thou hast stood looking for God to come in at, and no sight or news of thy God is coming that way? thy corruption yet stirs, it may be is more troublesome than before; now thou askest, where is the strength promised to thy relief? Let me entreat thee before thou layest down that sad Conclusion against thy God or self, see whether he hath not conveyed in some strength by another door: Perhaps thou hast not strength to conquer it so soon as thou desirest, but hath he not given thyself praying strength against it? Thou prayedst before, but now more earnestly; all the powers of thy soul are up to plead with God: Before thou wast more favourable and moderate in thy request, now thou hast a Zeal, thou canst take no denial; yea, welcome any thing in the room of

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thy corruption: Would God but take thy sin and send a Cross, thou wouldst bless him: Now, poor soul, is this nothing, no strength? Had not thy God re-inforced thee, thy sin would have weakened the spirit of thy Prayer, and not encreased it; *David* began to recover himself, when he began to recover his Spirit of Prayer. The stronger the Cry, the stronger the Child, I warrant you. *Jacob* wrestled, and this is called his strength, *Hof.* 12. It appeared, there was much of God in him that he could take such hold of the Almighty, as to keep it, though God seemed to shake him off: If thus thou art enabled, Soul, to deal with the God of heaven, no fear but thou shalt be much more able to deal with Sin and Satan. If God hath given thee so much strength, to wrestle with him above and against denials, thou hast prevailed with the stronger of the two: overcome God, and he'll overcome the other for thee. Again, perhaps thou hast been praying for further strength to be communicated to thee in duty, that thou mightst be more spiritual, vigorous, united, sincere, and the like therein, and yet thou findest thy old distempers hanging about thee, as if thou hadst never acquainted God with thy ail: Well, soul, look once again into thy bosom with an unprejudiced eye, though thou dost not find the assisting strength thou prayedst for, yet hast thou no more self-abasing strength? Perhaps the annoyance thou hast from these remaining distempers in duty, occasion thee to have a meaner opinion of all thy duties than ever, yea, they make thee abhor thy self in the sense of these, as if thou hadst so many loathsome Vermin about thee. *Job's* condition on the Dunghil, with all his Batches and Running Sores on his body, appears desirable to thee, in comparison of thine, whose soul thou complaineest is worse than his body. O this afflicts thy soul deeply, doth it not? that thou shouldst appear before the Lord with such a dead, divided heart, and do his work worst, that deserves best at thy hands, and is all this nothing? Surely, Christian, thine eyes are held as much as *Hagar's*, or else thou wouldst see the streamings forth of Divine Grace in this frame of thy heart; surely others will think God hath done a mighty work in thy soul; What harder and more against the hair, than to bring our proud hearts to take shame for that, whereof they naturally boast and glory? And is it nothing for thee to tread on the very neck of thy Duties, and count them matter of thy humiliation and abasing, which others make the matter of their confidence and self-rejoycing? Good store of Virtue hath gone from Christ, to dry this Issue of Pride in thy heart, which sometimes in gracious ones runs through and through their Duties, that it is seen, or may be by those that have less Grace than themselves.

Secondly, Christian, candidly interpret Gods dealings with thee. Suppose it be as thou saist, thou hast pleaded the promise, and waited on the means; and yet findest no strength from all these receipts, either in thy Grace or Comfort, now take heed of charging God foolishly, as if God were not what he promisseth, this were to give that to Satan, which he is all this while gaping for. It is more

becoming the dutiful disposition of a Child, when he hath not presently what he writes for to his Father, to say, My Father is wiser than I, his wisdom will prompt him, what and when to send to me, and his fatherly affections to me his Child, will neither suffer him to deny any thing that is good, or slip the time that is seasonable. Christian, thy heavenly Father hath gracious ends that hold his hand at present, or else thou hadst ere this heard from him.

First, God may deny further degrees of strength to put thee on the exercise of that thou hast more carefully. As a Mother doth by her Child, that is learning to go, she sets it down, and stands some distance from it, and bids it come to her; the Child feels its Legs weak, and cries for the Mothers help, but the Mother steps back on purpose, that the Child should put forth all its little strength in making after her. When a poor soul comes and prays against such a sin, God seems to step back, and stand at a distance; the temptation increaseth, and no visible succour appears, on purpose that the Christian, though weak, should exercise that strength he hath. Indeed we shall find the sense of a souls weakness, is an especial means to excite it into a further care and diligence: One that knows his weakness, how prone he is in company to forget himself; in passion how apt he is to fly out, if there be a Principle of true Grace, this will excite him to be more fearful and watchful, than another that hath obtained greater strength against such great temptations. As a Child that writes for Money to his Father, none comes presently, that makes him husband that little he hath the better, not a penny now shall be laid out idly. Thus when a Christian hath prayed against such a sin again and again, and yet finds himself weak, prone to be worsted; O how careful will this, should this make such a one of every company, of every occasion? Such a one had not need give his Enemy any advantage.

Secondly, God may deny the Christian such assisting strength in duty, or mortifying strength of Corruption, as he desires, purely on a gracious design, that he may thereby have an advantage of expressing his love in such a way, as shall most kindly work upon the ingenuity of the Soul to love God again. Perhaps (Christian) thou prayest for a mercy thou wantest, or for deliverance out of some great affliction, and in the duty thou findest not more assistance than ordinary, yea, many distractions of Spirit in it, and misgiving Thoughts with unbelieving fears after it: Well, notwithstanding those defects in thy Duty, yet God hears thy prayer, and sends in the mercy on purpose, that he may greatness his Love in thine eye, and make it more luscious and sweet to thy Taste, from his accepting thy weak services, and passing by the distempers of thy Spirit. Here is less strength for the duty, that thou maist have more love in the mercy, nothing will affect a gracious heart more than such a Consideration. See it in *David*, *Psal.* 116. 11, 12. *I said in my haste, All men are Liars. What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me?* As if *David* had said, notwithstanding all the comfortable message I had from God by his Prophets concerning this matter,

matter, my own prayers, and those remarkable providences, which carried in them a partial answer to them, and performance of what was promised, yet I betrayed much unbelief, questioning the truth of the one, and the return of the other; and hath God notwithstanding all my infirmities fulfill'd my desire, and performed his promise? O what shall I render unto the Lord? Thus *David* reads Gods mercy through the Spectacles of his own weakness and infirmity, and it appears great; whereas if a Mercy should come in, as an answer to a duty managed with such strength of Faith, and height of other Graces, as might free him and his duty from usual infirmities, this might prove a snare, and occasion some self-applauding, rather than mercy-admiring thoughts in the Creature.

Thirdly, God may communicate the less of his assisting strength, that he may shew the more of his supporting strength, in upholding weak Grace: We do not wonder to see a man of strong constitution, that eats his bread heartily, and sleeps soundly, live: But for a crazy Body, full of ails and infirmities, to be so patcht and shored up by the Physicians Art, that he stands to old Age, this begets some wonder in the Beholders. It may be thou art a poor trembling Soul, thy Faith is weak, and thy Assaults from Satan strong, thy Corruptions stirring and active, and thy mortifying strength little, so that in thy opinion they rather gain ground on thy Grace, than give ground to it, ever and anon thou art ready to think, thou shalt be cast as a wrack upon the Devils shore: and yet to this day thy Grace lives, though full of Leaks; now is it not worth the stepping aside to see this strange sight? A broken Ship with Masts and Hull rent and torn, thus towed along by Almighty Power, through an angry Sea, and Armadoes of Sins and Devils, safely into his Harbour. To see a poor dilling or rush-candle in the face of the boisterous wind, and not blown out; in a word, to see a weak stripling in Grace held up in Gods Arms till he beats the Devil Craven: This God is doing in upholding thee: Thou art one of those *Babes*, out of whose mouth God is perfecting his praise, by ordaining such strength for thee, that thou a Babe in Grace, shalt yet foil a Giant in wrath and power.

Thirdly, If after long waiting for strength from God, it be as thou complainest, enquire whether the *ἡ κεφαλή*, that which hinders, be not found in thy self. The Head is the Seat of Animal Spirits, yet there may be such obstructions in the body, as the other members may for a time be deprived of them; till the passage be free between Christ thy Head, and thee, thy strength will not come, and therefore be willing to enquire.

First, Hast thou come indeed to God for strength to perform Duty, to mortifie Corruption, and the like? Perhaps thou wilt say, Yes, I have waited on those Ordinances, which are the way in which he hath promised to give out strength. But is this all? Thou maist come to them, and not wait on God in them. Hast thou not carnally expected strength from them, and so put the Ordinance, as she her Husband in Gods stead? Hath not the frame of thy Spirit some Affinity with theirs in *James* 4. 13. We

will go into such a City, and buy, and sell, and get gain? Hath not thy heart said, I will go and hear such a man, and get comfort, get strength? and dost thou wonder thou art weak, barren, and unfruitful? Are Ordinances God, that they should make you strong or comfortable? Thou maist hear them answer thee, poor soul, as the King to the Woman in the siege of *Samaria*: Help, O Prayer, faist thou, or, O Minister; How can they help except the Lord help? These are but Christs Servants: Christ keeps the Key of his Wine-Cellar, they cannot so much as make you drink, when you come to your Masters houses; and therefore, poor Soul, stay not short of Christ, but press through all the Croud of Ordinances, and ask to speak with Jesus, to see Jesus, and touch him, and Virtue will come forth.

Secondly, Ask thy soul whether thou hast been thankful for that little strength thou hast; though thou art not of that strength in Grace, to run with the foremost, and hold pace with the tallest of thy brethren, yet art thou thankful that thou hast any strength at all? though it be but to cry after them, whom thou seest out-strip thee in Grace, this is worth thy thanks. All in *Davids* Army attained not to be equal with his few Worthies in Prowess and Honour; and yet did not cashier themselves: Thou hast reason to be thankful for the meanest place in the Army of Saints, the least communications of Gospel-mercy and Grace must not be overlookt. As soon as ever *Moses* with his Army was through the Sea, they strike up before they stir from the Bank-side, and acknowledge the wonderful appearance of Gods Power and Mercy for them, though this was but one step in their way; a howling Wilderness presented it self to them, and they not able to subsist a few days with all their provision, for all their great Victory, yet *Moses*, he will praise God for this Handseal of Mercy. This holy man knew the only way to keep credit with God, so as to have more, was to keep touch, and pay down his praise for what was received. If thou wouldst have fuller communications of divine strength, own God in what he hath done. Art thou weak? Bless God thou hast Life. Dost thou through feebleness often fail in duty, and fall into temptation? Mourn in the sense of these; yet bless God, that thou dost not live in a total neglect of duty, out of a prophane contempt thereof, and that instead of falling through weakness, thou dost not lie in the mire of sin through the wickedness of thy heart. The unthankful soul may thank it self, it thrives no better.

Thirdly, Art thou humble under the assistance and strength God hath given thee? Pride stops the Conduit; if the heart begin to swell, it is time for God to hold his hand, and turn the Cock; for all that is poured on such a soul, runs over into self-applauding, and so is as water spilt in regard of any good it doth the Creature, or any Glory it brings to God. A proud heart and a lofty Mountain are never fruitful. Now beside the common ways that pride discovers it self, as by under-valuing others, and over-valuing it self, and such like, you shall observe two other symptoms of it. First, It ap-

pears in bold adventures, when a person runs into the mouth of temptation, bearing himself upon the confidence of his Grace received. This was *Peters* sin, by which he was drawn to engage further than became an humble faith, running into the Devils Quarters, and so became his Prisoner for a while. The good man, when in his right temper, had thoughts low enough of himself, as when he ask't his Master, *Is it I?* But he that feared at one time, lest he might be the Traitor, at another cannot think so ill of himself, as to suspect he should be the denier of his Master. What he? No, though all the rest should forsake him, yet he would stand to his Colours. Is this thy Case, Christian? Possibly God hath given thee much of his mind, thou art skilful in the Word of Life, and therefore thou dar'st venture to breath in corrupt air, as if only the weak spirits of less knowing Christians, exposed them to be infected with the Contagion of Error and Heresie. Thou hast a large portion of Grace, or at least thou thinkest so, and ventur'st to go where an humble-minded Christian would fear his heels should slip under him. Truly now thou tempt'st God to suffer thy Lock to be cut off, when thou art so bold to lay thy head in the Lap of a Temptation. Secondly, Pride appears in the neglect of those means, whereby the Saints Graces and Comforts are to be fed when strongest. May be, Christian, when thou art under fears and doubts, then God hath thy Company, thou art oft with thy Pitcher at his door; but when thou hast got any measure of peace, there grows presently some strangeness between God and thee: thy Pitcher walks not as it was wont to these Wells of Salvation. No wonder if thou (though rich in Grace and Comfort) goest behind-hand, seeing thou spendest on the old stock, and drivest no trade at present to bring in more: or if thou dost not thus neglect duty, yet may be thou dost not perform it with that humility, which formerly beautified the same: then thou praydest in the sense of thy weakness to get strength, now thou prayest to shew thy strength, that others may admire thee. And if once (like *Hezekiah*) we call in Spectators to see our Treasure, and applaud us for our Gifts and Comfort, then it is high time for

God, if he indeed love us, to send some messengers to carry these away from us, which carry our hearts from him.

Fourthly, If thy heart doth not smite thee from what hath been said, but thou hast sincerely waited on God, and yet hast not received the strength thou desirest, yet let it be thy resolution to live and die waiting on him. God doth not tell us his time of coming, and it were boldness to set one of our own heads. Go, saith Christ to his Disciples, *Luke 24. 49. Stay ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* Thus he saith to thee; Stay at Jerusalem, wait on him in the means he hath appointed, till thou beest endued with further power to mortifie thy Corruptions, &c. And for thy comfort know,

First, Thy thus persevering to wait on God, will be an evidence of strong Grace in thee: the less encouragement thou hast to Duty, the more thy Faith and Obedience to bear thee up in duty. He that can trade when times are so dead, that all his Ware lies upon his hand, and yet draws not in his hand, but rather trades more and more, sure his Stock is great. What, no comfort in hearing, no ease to thy Spirit in praying, and yet more greedy to hear, and more frequent in prayer? O soul, great is thy Faith and Patience.

2. Assure thy self when thou art at the greatest pinch, strength shall come: *They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength*: when the last handful of meal was dressing, then is the Prophet sent to keep the Widows house. When Temptation is strong, thy little strength even spent, and thou ready to yield into the hands of thine Enemies, then expect succours from Heaven to enable thee to hold out under the temptation: Thus to *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient*, or power from Heaven to raise the siege, and drive away the Tempter: thus to *Job*, when Satan had him at an advantage, then God takes him off. Like a wise Moderator, when the Respondent is hard put to it by a subtle Opponent, takes him off, when he would else run him down, *Jam. 5. 11. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

EPHES. 6. II.

Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

THis Verse is a Key to the former, wherein the Apostle had exhorted Believers to encourage, and bear up their fainting Spirits on the Lord, and the power of his might. Now in these words he explains himself, and shews how he would have them do this, not presumptuously come into the Field without that Armour which God hath appointed to be worn by all his Souldiers, and yet with a Bravado to

trust in the power of God to save them. That Soul is sure to fall short of home (Heaven I mean) who hath nothing but a carnal confidence on the Name of God, blown up by the ignorance of God and himself: No, he that would have his Confidence duly placed on the power of God, must conscientiously use the means appointed for his defence, and not rush naked into the Battel, like that Fanatic Spirit at *Munster*, who would needs go forth, and

and chase away the whole Army, then besieging that City, with no other Cannon, than a few words charged with the Name of *The Lord of Hosts*, (which he blasphemously made bold to use) saying, *In the Name of the Lord of Hosts depart*. But himself soon perished, to learn others wisdom by what he paid for his folly. What foolish braving Language shall you hear drop from the Lips of the most prophane and ignorant among us? They trust in God, hope in his mercy, despise the Devil and all his works, and such like stuff, who yet are poor naked Creatures without the least piece of Gods Armour upon their souls. To cashier such presumption from the Saints Camp, he annexeth this Directory to his Exhortation, *Put on the whole Armour of God*, &c. So that the words fall into these two general parts.

First, A Direction annex'd to the former Exhortation, shewing how we may in a regular way come to be strong in the Lord, that is, by putting on *the whole Armour of God*.

Secondly, A Reason or Argument strengthening this Direction, *That we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil*. In the Direction observe,

1. The Furniture he directs, and that is *Armour*.

Secondly, The kind or quality of this Armour, *Armour of God*.

Thirdly, The quantity or entireness of the Armour; *The whole Armour of God*.

Fourthly, The use of this Armour; *Put on the whole Armour of God*.

To begin with the first, The Furniture which every one must get that would fight Christs Battels. The Question here will be, What is this Armour?

First, By Armour is meant Christ; we read of putting on *the Lord Jesus*, Rom. 13. 14. Where Christ is set forth under the notion of Armour. The Apostle doth not exhort them for Rioting and Drunkenness, to put on Sobriety and Temperance; for Chambering and Wantonness, put on Chastity; (as the Philosopher would have done) but bids, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*; implying thus much, till Christ be put on, the Creature is unarmed. 'Tis not a mans Morality and Philosophical Virtues, that will repel a temptation, sent with a full Charge from Satans Cannon, though possibly it may be the Pistol-shot of some less solicitation; so that he is the man in Armour, that is in Christ. Again, the Graces of Christ, these are Armour, as the *Girdle of Truth*, the *Breast-plate of Righteousness*, and the rest. Hence we are bid also *put on the new man*, Eph. 4. 24. Which is made up of all the several Graces, as its parts and members. And he is the unarmed soul, that is the unregenerate soul. Not excluding those duties and means which God hath appointed the Christian to use for his defence.

The Phrase thus opened, the Point is,

CHAP. I.

Sheweth the Christless and Graceless Soul, to be the Soul without Armour, and therein his Misery.

Observ. **T**hat a person in a Christless, graceless state, is naked and unarmed, and so unfit to fight Christs battels against Sin and Satan. Or thus, A soul out of Christ is naked and destitute of all Armour to defend him against Sin and Satan. God at first sent man forth in compleat Armour, *being created in righteousness and true holiness*; but by a wile the Devil stript him, and therefore as soon as the first sin was compleated, it is written, *Gen. 3. 7. They were naked*, that is, poor weak Creatures, at the will of Satan, a subdued people, disarmed by their proud Conqueror, and unable to make head against him. Indeed it cost Satan some dispute to make the first Breach, but, after that he had once the Gates opened to let him in as Conqueror into the heart of man, he plaies *Rex*: Behold a Troop of other sins crowd in after him, without any stroke or strife, instead of confessing their sins, they run their head in a Bush, and by their good will would not come where God is, and when they cannot flee from him, how do they prevaricate before him? They peal one of another, shifting the sin, rather than suing for mercy. So quickly were their hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And this is the woful condition of every Son and Daughter of *Adam*, naked he finds us, and slaves makes us, till God by his effectual Call delivers us from the

power of Satan into the Kingdom of his dear Son: which will further appear, if we consider this Christless state in a four-fold notion.

First, It is a state of Alienation from God, Eph. 2. 12. *Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the Covenant of Promise*, &c. Such a one hath no more to do with any Covenant promise, than he that lives at *Rome* hath to do with the Charter of *London*, which is the Birth-right of its own Denisons, not Strangers. He is without God in the world, he can claim no more protection from God, than an out-law'd Subject from his Prince: If any mischief befalls him, the mends is in his own hands; whereas God hath his Hedge of special Providence about his Saints; and the Devil, though his spite be most at them, dares not come upon Gods ground to touch any of them, without particular leave. Now what a deplored condition is that, wherein a soul is left to the wide world, in the midst of Legions of Lusts, and Devils, to be rent and torn like a silly Hare among a Pack of Hounds, and no God to call them off? Let God leave a people, though never so warlike, presently they lose their Wits, cannot find their Hands. A company of Children or wounded men may rise up, and chase them out of their fenced Cities, because God is not with them; which made *Caleb* and *Jo-*

shuah

Jonah pacified the mutinous *Israelites* at the tidings of Giants and Walled Cities, with this; *They are Bread for us, their Defence is departed from them.* How much more must that soul be as bread to Satan, that hath no defence from the Almighty? Take men of the greatest parts, natural or acquired accomplishments, who only want an union with Christ, and renewing grace from Christ: O what Fools doth the Devil make of them, leading them at his pleasure, some to one Lust, some to another; the proudest of them all is slave to one or other, though it be to the ruining of body and soul for ever. Where lies the mystere, that men of such parts and wisdom should debase themselves to such drudgery work of Hell? Even here, they are in a state of alienation from God, and no more able of themselves to break the Devils Prison, than a Slave to run from his Chain.

Secondly, The Christless state is a state of ignorance, and such must needs be naked and unarmed. He that cannot see his Enemy, how can he ward off the blow he sends? One seeing Prophet leads a whole Army of blind men whither he pleaseth. The imperfect Knowledge Saints have here, is Satans advantage against them; he often takes them on the blind side; how easily then may he with a parcel of good words carry the blind Soul out of his way, who knows not a step of the right? Now that the Christless state is a state of ignorance, see Eph. 5. 8. *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Ye were darkness, not in the dark; so one that hath an eye may be. A Child of Light is often in the dark, concerning some truth or promise, but then hath a spiritual eye, which the Christless person wants, and so is darkness. And this darkness cannot be enlightened, but by its union with Christ, which is expressed in the following phrase; *But now are ye light in the Lord.* As the eye of the body once put out, can never be restored by the Creatures Art, so neither can the spiritual eye, lost by Adams sin, be restored by the teaching of Men and Angels. It is one of the diseases which Christ came to cure, *Luke 4. 18.* 'Tis true, there is a light of Reason, which is imparted to every man by nature, but this light is darkness, compared with the Saints. As the night is dark to the day, even when the Moon is in its full glory. This night-light of Reason may save a person from some Ditch, or Pond, great and broad sins, but it will never help him to escape the more secret corruptions, which the Saints see like Atoms in the Beams of spiritual Knowledge. There is such curious work the creature is to do, which cannot be wrought by Candle-light of Natural Knowledge. Nay more, where the common illumination of the Spirit is super-added to this light of Nature, yet that is darkness compar'd with the sanctifying Knowledge of a renewed soul, which doth both discover spiritual truths, and warm the heart at the same time with the love of truth, having like the Sun a Prolifical and quickning virtue, which the other wants; so that the heart lies under such common illuminations cold and dead. He hath no more strength to resist Satan, than if he knew not the Command, whereas the Christian Knowledge, even when taken Pri-

soner by a temptation, pursues and brings back the soul, as *Abraham* his Nephew, out of the enemies hands: which hints the third.

Thirdly, The Christless state is a state of impotency, *Rom. 5. When we were without strength, Christ came to die for the ungodly.* What can a disarmed people that have not Sword or Gun, do to shake off the yoke of a conquering enemy? Such a power hath Satan over the soul, *Luke 11. 21.* He is called the strong man that keeps the soul as his Palace: if he hath no disturbance from heaven, he need fear no mutiny within; he keeps all in peace there. What the Spirit of God doth in a Saint, that in a manner doth Satan in a sinner. The Spirit fills the heart of his with Love, Joy, holy Desires, Fears; so Satan fills the sinners heart with Pride, Lust, Lying: *Why hath Satan filled thy heart? saith Peter.* And thus filled with Satan (as the Drunkard with Wine) he is not his own man, but Satans slave.

Fourthly, The state of Unregeneracy is a state of Friendship with Sin and Satan. If it be enmity against God, (as it is) then friendship with Satan. Now it will be hard to make that soul fight in earnest against his Friend. Is Satan divided? Will the Devil within, fight against the Devil without? Satan in the heart, shut out Satan at the door? Sometimes indeed there appears a scuffle between Satan and a carnal heart; but it is a meer Cheat, like the fighting of two Fencers on a Stage: you would think at first they were in earnest, but observing how wary they are, where they hit one another, you may soon know they do not mean to kill; and that which puts all out of doubt, when the Prize is done, you shall see them making merry together, with what they have got of their Spectators, which was all they fought for: when a carnal heart makes the greatest bufile against sin, by complaining of it, or praying against it, follow him but off the Stage of duty (where he hath gained the Reputation of a Saint, the prize he fights for) and you shall see them sit as friendly together in a Corner as ever.

Use 1. First, This takes away the wonder of Satans great Conquests in the world; when you look abroad, and see his vast Empire, and what a little spot of ground contains Christs subjects, what heaps of precious souls lie prostrate under this foot of pride, and what a little Regiment of Saints march under Christs Banner: perhaps the strangeness of the thing may make you ask, Is Hell stronger than Heaven? the Arms of Satan more victorious than the Cross of Christ? No such matter: consider but this one thing, and you will wonder that Christ hath any to follow him, rather than he hath so few. Satan finds the world unarmed; when the Prince of the World comes, he finds nothing to oppose, the whole soul is in a disposition to yield at first summons; and if Conscience, Governour for God in the Creature, stands out a while, all the other powers, as Will and Affections, are in a discontent, (like mutinous Souldiers in a Garrison) who never rest till they have brought over Conscience to yield, or against its Command, set open the City-Gate to the Enemy, and so deliver traiterously their Conscience Prisoner to their Lusts: But when Christ comes

comes to demand the soul, he meets a scornful answer; *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of the most High. We will not have this man to reign over us.* With one consent they vote against him, and rise up as the *Philistines* against *Sampson*, whom they call'd the *Destroyer of the Countrey. He will not come unto me*, saith Christ. O how true are poor sinners to the Devils trust! They will not deliver the Cattle they hold for Satan, till fired over their heads. *Pharaoh* opposeth *Moses* on one hand, and *Israel* cry out upon him on the other. Such measure hath Christ both at Satans hand, and the sinners. That which lessened *Alexanders* Conquests, was, he overcame a people buried in Barbarism, without Arms, or Discipline of war; and that which heightened *Cesars* (though not so many) he overcame a people more warlike and furnished. Satans victories are of poor ignorant, graceless souls, who have neither Arms, nor Hands, nor Hearts to oppose; but when he assaults a Saint, then he sits down before a City with Gates and Bars, and ever riseth with shame; unable to take the weakest hold, to pluck the weakest Saint out of Christs hands; but Christ brings souls out of his dominion with a high hand, in spite of all the force and fury of Hell, which like *Pharaoh* and his Host pursue them.

Secondly, This gives us a Reason why the Devil hath so great a spight against the Gospel. Why? because this opens a Magazine of Arms and Furniture for the Soul; the Word is that *Tower of David*, Cant. 4. 4. *built for an Armoury, wherein there hang a thousand Bucklers, all the Shields of mighty men.* Hence the Saints have ever had their Armour, and the preaching of the Gospel unlocks it. As Gospel-light ascends, so Satans shady Kingdom of darkness vaniseth, Rev. 14. 16. There one Angel comes forth to preach the everlasting Gospel; and another Angel follows at his back, v. 8. crying *Victoria, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* The very first charge the Gospel gave to the Kingdom of darkness, shak'd the foundations thereof, and put the Legions of Hell to the Run. The Seventy, whom Christ sent out, bring this speedy Account of their Ambassage, *Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through thy Name:* and Christ answers, *I beheld Satan as Lightning fall from heaven.* As if he had said, 'tis no news you tell me, I beheld Satan fall when I sent you: I knew the Gospel would make work where it came; and therefore no wonder Satan labours to dispossess the Gospel, which dispossesseth him: he knows that Army is near lost, whose Magazine is blown up: 'Tis true indeed, under the very Gospel the Devil rageth more in such swinish sinners, as are given over of God, to be possess'd of that Fiend, for rejecting of his Grace; but he is cast out of others, who before the loving kindness of God to man appeared in the Gospel, were commanded by him, *-serving divers Lusts and Pleasures:* But now by the light of the Gospel they see their folly, and by the grace it brings are enabled to renounce him. This, this, is that which torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take his subjects from him: and therefore he labours either by persecution to drive the Gospel away, or by policy to persuade a

people to send it away from their Coasts, and was he ever more likely to effect it among us? What a low esteem hath he brought the preaching of the Gospel unto? The price is fallen half in half to what it was some years past, even among those that have been counted the greatest Merchants upon the Saints Exchange. Some, that have thought it worth crossing the Seas, even to the *Indies* (almost as far as others fetch their Gold) to enjoy the Gospel, are loth now to cross the street to hear it at so cheap a rate; and some that come (who formerly trembled at it) make it most of their Errand to mock at, or quarrel with it. Nay, it is come to such a pass, that the word is so heavy a charge to the squeamish stomachs of many Professors, that it comes up again presently, and abundance of Choler with it against the Preacher, especially if it fall foul on the sins and errors of the times, the very naming of which is enough to offend, though the Nation be sinking under the weight. What reproaches are the faithful Ministers of the Gospel laden withal? I call Heaven and Earth to witness, whether ever they suffered a hotter persecution of the Tongue, than in this apostatizing age. A new Generation of Professors are started up, that will not know them to be the Ministers of Christ, though those before them, (as well in grace, as time, more able to derive their spiritual Pedigree, than themselves) have to their death owned them for their spiritual Fathers. And must not the Ark needs shake, when they that carry it are thus struck at, both in their Person and Office? What are these men doing? alas, they know not, *Father, forgive them*; They are cutting off their right hand with their left: they are making themselves and the Nation naked, by despising the Gospel, and those that bring it.

Use 3. Consider your deplored estate, who are wholly naked and unarmed. Can you pity the Beggar at your door, (when you see such in a winter-day, shivering with naked backs, exposed to the fury of the Cold) and not pity your own far more dismal soul-nakedness, by which thou liest open to Heavens wrath, and Hells malice? Shall their nakedness cover them with shame, fill them with fear of perishing, which makes them with pitiful moans knock and cry for relief, as it is reported of *Russia*, where their poor (through extream necessity) have this desperate manner of begging in the streets; *Give me and cut me, give me and kill me?* And canst thou let Satan come and cut thy throat in thy bed of sloth, rather than accept of Cloaths to cover, yea, Armour to defend thee? (I mean Christ and his Grace, which in the Gospel is tendered to you.) And do not lightly believe your flattering hearts, if they shall tell you, you are provided of these already. I am afraid many a gaudy Professor will be found as naked in regard of Christ, and truth of Grace, as Drunkards and Swearers themselves. Such there are, who content themselves with a Christ in Profession, in Gifts, and in Duties, but seek not a Christ in solid Grace, and so perish; those indeed are an Ornament to the Christian, as the Scarf and Feather to the Soldier, but these quench not the Bullet in Battel, 'tis Christ and his Grace doth that, therefore labour to be

be found rather than brave Christians. Grace embellish'd with Gifts is the more beautiful, but these without Grace only the richer spoil for Satan.

The second Branch of the first general Part of the Words follows: and that is, the quality or kind of that Armour, the Christian is here dire-

cted to provide. It is not any trash will serve the turn, better none than not Armour of Proof, and none such, but Armour of God. In a two-fold respect it must be of God. First, In Institution and Appointment. Secondly, In Constitution.

CHAP. II.

Sheweth, that the Armour we use against Satan, must be divine in the Institution, such only as God appoints.

Observ. First, The Christians Armour which he wears must be of divine Institution and Appointment. The Souldier comes into the Field with no Arms, but what his General commands; 'tis not left to every ones fancy to bring what weapons he please, this will breed confusion. The Christian souldier is bound up to Gods Order, though the Army be on Earth, yet the Council of War sits in Heaven: This duty ye shall do, that means ye shall use; and to do more or use other than God commands, though with some seeming success against sin; such shall surely be called to an account for this boldness. The Discipline of War among men is strict in this case. Some have suffered death by a Council of War, even when they have beaten the Enemy, because out of their place, or beside their order. God is very precise in this point, he will say to such as invent ways to worship him of their own, and coin means to mortifie Corruption, obtain comfort in their own Mint; *Who hath required this at your hands?* This is truly to be *righteous over-much*, (as Solomon speaks) when we will pretend to correct Gods Law, and add supplements of our own to his Rule. Who will pay that man his wages, that is not set on work by God? God tells *Israel*, the false Prophets shall do them no good, because they come not of his Errand, *Jer. 23. 22*. So neither will those ways and means help, which are not of Gods appointing; Gods thoughts are not as mans, nor his ways as ours, which he useth to attain his ends by. If man had been to set forth the *Israelitish* Army, now to march out of *Egypt*; surely his wisdom would have directed rather to have plundered the *Egyptians* of their Horse and Arms (as more necessary for such an expedition) than to borrow their Jewels and Ear-Rings, but God will have them come out naked and on foot; and *Moses* keeps close to his order; yea, when horses were taken in Battel, because God commanded they should be houghed, they obeyed, though to their seeming disadvantage. It was Gods War they waged, and therefore but reasonable they should be under his command, they incamp'd and march'd by his order; as the Ark moved or rested, they fought by his command, the number appointed by him, the means and weapons they should use, all prescribed by God, as in the Assault of *Jericho*: and what is the Gospel of all this? (for surely God hath an eye in that to our marching to heaven, and our fighting with these cursed Spirits and Lusts that stand in our way) but that we should fight lawfully, using those

means, which we have from his mouth in his Word?

This reproveth two sorts.

Use 1. First, Those that fight Satan in Armour, that hath no divine Institution, as,

First, The Papiſt. Look into his Armoury, and hardly a piece that will be found Armour of God. They fight in the Popes Armour: his Authority is the shop, wherein their weapons are forged: it were a kind of pennance to your patience, to repeat all the several pieces of Armour, with which they load silly souls, too heavy indeed for the broadest shoulders among them to bear; yea, more than the wiser sort of them mean to use, their Masses, Matens, Vigils, Pilgrimages, Lent-Fasts, Whippings, Vows of Chastity, Poverty, with a world of such Trash; where is a Word of God for these who hath required these things at their hands? A thousand woes will one day fall upon those Impostors, who have stript the people of the true Armour of God, and put these Reeds and Bul-rushes in their hands. This may justify us in the sight of God and men, for our departure from them, who will force us to venture the life of our souls in such Paper-armour, when God hath provided better.

Secondly, The carnal Protestant, who fights in fleshly Armour, *2 Cor. 10. 3*. The Apostle speaks there of *warring after the flesh*, that is, with weapons or means, which mans carnal wisdom prompts to, and not Gods Commands, and so are weak. How few are clad with other in the day of Battel? First, When Satan tempts to sin, if he hath not presently a peaceable entrance, yet the resistance commonly made is carnal; the strength carnal they rest on, their own not Gods; the motives carnal, as the fear of man more than of God. Where one saith, How shall I do this and sin against God? many in their hearts say, How shall I do this and anger man, displease my Master, provoke my Parents, and lose the good opinion of my Minister? *Herod* feared *John*, and did many things; had he feared God, he would have laboured to have done every thing. The like may be said of all other motives, which have their spring in the Creature, not in God; they are Armour which will not out-stand shot. If thy strength lie in a Creature-Lock, it may be soon cut off; if in God, it will hold, as his Command; *It is written*: I cannot do it, but I must set my foot on the Law of my Maker. Or the Love of Christ; I cannot come at my Lust, but I must go over my bleeding Saviour, and therefore away, foul Tempter, I hate thee

thee and thy motion, This Foundation is Rock, and will stand; but if it be some carnal respect that balanceth thee, another more weighty may be found of the same kind, which will cast the Scales another way. She that likes not the man because of his Dreſs only, may soon be gained when he comes in another habit. Satan can change his Suit, and then thy mouth will be stopp'd when thy carnal Argument is taken off. Secondly, When the Word or Conscience rebuke for sin, what is the Armour that men commonly cover their guilty souls withal? truly no other than carnal. If they cannot evade the Charge that these bring, then they labour to mitigate it, by extenuating the fact. 'Tis true, will they say, I did (I confess) commit such a fault, but I was drawn in; *The woman gave me, and I did eat*, was Adams Fig leaf Armour: 'tis but once or twice, and I hope that breaks no such squares, was this such a great business? I know jolly Christians will do as much as this comes to; I thank God, I cannot be charged for Whore or Thief: This is the Armour that must keep off the Blow. But if Conscience will not be thus taken off, then they labour to divert their thoughts, by striking up the loud Musick of carnal delights, that the noise of one may drown the other, or with *Cain*, they will go from the presence of the Lord, and come no more at those Ordinances which make their head ake, and hinder the rest of their raving Consciences. If yet the Ghost haunts them, then they labour to pacify it, with some good work or other, which they set against their bad; their Alms and Charity in their old age, must expiate the Oppression and Violence of their former days: as if this little Frankincense were enough to air and take away the Plague of Gods Curse, which is in their ill-gotten goods. Thus poor Creatures catch at any sorry covering, which will not so much as hide their shame, much less choak the Bullet of Gods wrath, when God shall fire upon them; this must be the Armour of Gods appointing. Adam was naked for all his Fig-leaves, while God taught him to make Coats of skin, Gen. 3. 21. covertly (as some think) shadowing out Christ the true Lamb of God, whose Righteousness alone was appointed by him to cover our shame, and arm our naked souls from the sight and stroke of his Justice.

Secondly, It reproves those who use the Armour of God, but not as God hath appointed, which appears in three sorts.

First, When a person useth a duty appointed by God, not as Armour of defence against sin, but as a cover for sin. Who would think him an enemy that wears Christs Colours in his Hat, and marcheth after Christ in the exercise of all the duties of his Worship? such a one may pass all the Courts of Guard, without so much as being bid stand, all take him for a friend, and yet some such there are, who are fighting against Christ all the while. The Hypocrite is the man, he learns his postures, gets the Word, hath his tongue tip with Scripture Language, and walks in the habit of a Christian, merely on a design to drive his trade the more closely; like some High-way-men in our days, who rob in the habit of Souldiers, that they may be the less sus-

spected; this is desperate wickedness indeed, to take up Gods Arms, and use them in the Devils Service; or all sinners such shall find least mercy; false Friends shall speed worse than open Enemies.

Secondly, They use not the Armour of God, as God hath appointed, who put a carnal confidence therein. We must not confide in the Armour of God, but in the God of this Armour, because all *our weapons are only mighty through God*, 2 Cor. 10. The Ark was the means of the Jews safety, but carnally applauded and gloried in, hastened their overthrow: so Duties and Ordinances, Gifts and Graces in their place, are means for the souls defence: Satan trembles as much as the *Philistines* at the Ark, to see a soul diligent in the use of Duty, and exercise of Grace; but when the Creature confides in them, this is dangerous. As some, when they have prayed, think they please God for all day, though they take little heed to their steps. Others have so good an opinion of their Faith, Sincerity, Knowledge, that you may as soon make them believe they are dogs, as that they may ever be taken in such an error or sinful practice. Others, when assisted in duty, are prone to stroak their own head with a *Bene fecisti Bernarde*, and so promise themselves to speed, because they have done their errand so well. What speak such passages in the hearts of men, but a carnal confidence in their armour to their ruine? Many souls (we may safely say) do not only perish praying, repenting and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying and repenting, &c. while they carnally trust in these. As it falls out sometimes, that the Souldier in battel loseth his Life by means of his own Armour, it is so heavy he cannot flee with it, and so close buckled to him, that he cannot get it off, to flee for his life without it. If we be saved, we must come naked to Christ for all our Duties, we will not fly to Christ while confiding in them, and some are so lock'd into them, that they cannot come without them, and so in a day of temptation are trampled under the feet of Gods wrath, and Satans Fury. The poor *Publican* throws down his Arms (that is, all confidence in himself) cries for quarter at the hands of mercy; *God be merciful unto me a sinner*, and he comes off with his life, he went away justified: but the Pharisee, loaden with his Righteousness, and conceited of it, stands to it, and is lost.

Thirdly, They do not use the Armour of God as such, who in the performing of divine duties, eye not God through them, and this makes them all weak and ineffectual. Then the Word is mighty, when read as the Word of God; then the Gospel preach'd, powerful to convince the Conscience, and revive the drooping spirit, when heard, as the appointment of the great God, and not the exercise of a mean Creature. Now it will appear in three things, whether we eye divine appointment in the means.

First, When we engage in a duty, and look not up to God for his blessing. Didst thou eye Gods appointment in the means, thou wouldst say, Soul, if there come any good of thy present service, it must drop from Heaven, for it is Gods appointment, not mans: And can I profit whether God will or no?

or think to find and bring away any soul-enriching treasure from his Ordinance without his leave? Had I not best look up to him, by whose blessing I live more than by my bread?

Again, Secondly, It appears we look not at Gods appointment, when we have low thoughts of the Means. What is *Jordan*, that I should wash in it? What is the preaching, that I should attend on it, where I hear nothing but I knew before? What are these beggarly Elements of Water, and Bread, and Wine? Are not these the Reasonings of a soul that forgets who appoints these? Didst thou remember who commands, thou wouldst not question what the Command is; what though it be Clay, let Christ use it, and it shall open the eys, though in it self more like to put them out. Hadst thou thy eye on God, thou wouldst

silence thy carnal Reason with this; 'Tis God sends me to such a Duty, whatsoever he saith unto me I will do it, though he should send me (as Christ them) to draw Wine out of Pots fill'd with Water.

Thirdly, When a soul leaves off a Duty, because he hath not in it what he expected from it. O, saith the soul, I see it is in vain to follow the means as I have done; still Satan foils me, I will even give over. Dost thou remember, soul, 'tis Gods appointment? surely then thou wouldst persevere in the midst of discouragement. He that bids thee pray, bids thee pray without ceasing. He that bids thee hear, bids thee wait at the posts of wisdom: thou wouldst reason thus, God hath set me on Duty, and here I'll stand, till God takes me off, and bids me leave praying.

CHAP. III.

Sheweth that the Armour we use for our defence against Satan, must not only be divine by Institution, but Constitution also.

Secondly, The Christian Armour must be Armour of God, in regard of its make and constitution. My meaning is, 'tis not only God, that must appoint the Weapons and Arms the Christian useth for his defence: but he must also be the Efficient of them, he must work all their work in them and for them. Prayer is an appointment of God, yet this is not Armour of proof, except it be a Prayer of God flowing from his Spirit. Hope, that is the Helmet the Saint by Command is to wear, but this Hope must be Gods Creature; *who hath begotten us to a lively hope*, Jude 20. Faith, that's another principal piece in the Christians Furniture, but it must be *the Faith of Gods elect*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. Tit. 1. 1. He is to take Righteousness and Holiness for his Breast-plate; but it must be *true holiness*, Eph. 4. 24. *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*. Thus you see, it is not Armour as Armour, but as Armour of God, that makes the soul impregnable. *That which is born of God overcometh the world*. A Faith born of God, a Hope born of God, but the spurious adulterous brood of Duties and Graces being begot of mortal seed, cannot be immortal.

Must the souls Armour be of Gods make? be exhorted then to look narrowly, whether the Armour ye wear, be the workmanship of God or no. There is abundance of false ware put off now adays: little good Armour worn by the multitude of Professors: 'tis Satans after-game he plays, if he cannot please the sinner with his naked state of Prophaneness; then to put him off with something like Grace, some slightly stuff that shall neither do him good, nor Satan hurt; thus many like Children, that cry for a Knife or Dagger, and are pleased as well with a bone-Knife, and wooden Dagger, as with the best of all; so they have some Armour, it matters not what. Pray they must, but little care how it be performed: Believe in God! Yes, they hope they are not Infidels; but what it is, how they come by

it, or whether it will hold in an evil day, this never was put to the question in their hearts. Thus thousands perish with a vain conceit, they are arm'd against Satan, Death and Judgement, when they are *miserable and naked*; yea, worse on it than those who are more naked (those I mean) who have not a Rag of Civility to hide their shame from the worlds eye; and that in a double respect.

First, It is harder to work on such a soul savingly, because he hath a Form, though not the Power, and this affords him a Plea. A soul purely naked, nothing like the wedding-garment on, he is speechless; the Drunkard hath nothing to say for himself, when you ask him why he lives so swinishly; you may come up to him, and get within him, and turn the very mouth of his Conscience upon him, which will shoot conviction into him: But to come to deal with one that prays and hears, one that is a Pretender to Hope and Faith in God, here is a man in glistering Armour, he hath his Weapon in his hand, with which he will keep the Preacher, and the Word he thargeth him with, at arms length. Who can say, I am not a Saint? What Duty do I neglect? Here's a Breast-work he lies under, which makes him not so fair a mark either to the observation or reproof of another, his chief defect being within, where mans eye comes not. Again, 'tis harder to work on him, because he hath been tampered with already, and miscarried in the Essay. How comes such a one to be acquainted with such Duties, to make such a Profession? Was it ever thus? No, the Word hath been at work upon him, his Conscience hath feared him from his trade of wickedness into a form of Profession; but taking in short of Christ, for want of a through change, it is harder to remove him than the other: he is like a Lock whose Wards have been troubled, which makes it harder to turn the Key, than if never potter'd with. 'Tis better dealing with a wild ragged Colt, never back'd, than one that in breaking hath

hath took a wrong stroke. A Bone quite out of joint, than false set. In a word, such a one hath more to deny than a prophane Person; the one hath but his Lusts, his Whores, his Swill and Draff; but the other hath his duties, his seeming Graces. O how hard is it to perswade such a one to light, and hold Christs Stirrup, while he and his Duties are made Christs Footstool.

Secondly, Such a one is deepest in condemnation. None sink so far into Hell as those that come nearest Heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. As it aggravates the torments of damned souls in this respect above Devils, they had a Cord of mercy thrown out to them, which Devils had not: so by how much God by his Spirit waits on, pleads with, and by both gains on a soul more than others, by so much such a one (if he perish) will find Hell the hotter: these add to his sin, and the remembrance of his sin in Hell thus accented, will add to his torment. None will have such a sad parting from Christ, as those who went half way with him, and then left him. Therefore (I beseech you) look to your Armour. David would not fight in Armour he had not tried, though it was a Kings; perhaps some thought him too nice. What, is not the Kings Armour good enough for David? Thus many will say, Art thou so curious and precise? Such a great man doth thus and thus, and hopes to come to Heaven at last, and darest not thou venture thy soul in his Armour? No, Christian, follow not the example of the greatest on earth; 'tis thy own soul thou ventur'st in battel, therefore thou canst not be too choice of thy Armour. Bring thy heart to the Word, as the only Touch-stone of thy Grace and Furniture; the Word (I told you) is the Tower of David, from whence thy Armour must be fetcht, if thou canst find this Tower-stamp on it, then it is of God, else not. Try it therefore by this one Scripture-stamp: Those weapons are mighty, which God gives his Saints to fight his battels withal, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *The weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.* The Sword of the Spirit hath its point and edge, whereby it makes its way into his Heart and Conscience, through the impenitency of the one, and stupidity of the other, (wherewith Satan, as with Buff and Coat of Mail, arms the sinner against God) and there cuts and slashes, kills and mortifies Lust in its own Castle, where Satan thinks himself impregnable. The Breast-plate which is of God, doth not bend and break at every part of temptation, but is of such a divine temperament, that it repels Satans motions with scorn on Satans teeth. Should such a one as I sin? as *Nehemiah* in another case: and such are all the rest. Now try whether your weapons be mighty, or weak; what can you do or suffer more for God, than an Hypocrite that is clad in fleshly Armour? I'll tell you what the world saith, and if you be Christians, clear your selves, and wipe off that dirt which they throw upon your glistering Armour: they say, These Professors indeed have God more in their talk than we, they are oftner in the Mount of Duty than we, but when they come down into their shops, relations or worldly employments, then the best of them all is but like one of us; they

can throw the Tables of Gods Commandments out of their hands as well as we, come from a Sermon, and be as covetous and griping, as pievish and passionate as the worst; they shew as little love to Christ as others; when it is matter of cost, as to relieve a poor Saint, or maintain the Gospel, you may get more from a stranger, an enemy, than from a professing Brother. O Christians, either vindicate the Name of Christ, whose Ensign you seem to march after, or throw away your seeming Armour, by which you have drawn the eyes of the world upon you. If you will not, Christ himself will cashier you, and that with shame enough ere long. Never call that Armour of God, which defends thee not against the power of Satan. Take therefore the several pieces of your Armour, and try them, as the Souldier before he fights, will set his Helmet or Head-piece, as a Mark, at which he lets fly a Brace of Bullets, and as he finds them, so will wear them or leave them; but be sure thou shootest Scripture-bullets. Thou boastest of a Breast-plate of Righteousness; ask thy soul, Didst thou ever in thy life perform a duty to please God, and not to accommodate thy self? Thou hast prayed often against thy sin, a great noise of these Pieces have been heard coming from thee by others, as if there were some hot fight between thee and thy corruption, but canst thou indeed shew one sin that thou hast slain by all thy praying? *Joseph* was alive, though his Coat was brought bloody to *Jacob*; and so may thy sin be for all thy mortified look in duty, and out-cry thou makest against them. If thou wouldst thus try every piece, thy credulous heart would not so easily be cheated with Satans false Ware.

Object. But is all Armour that is of God thus mighty? We read of weak Grace, little Faith, how can this then be a trial of our Armour, whether of God or not?

Answer. I answer, The weakness of Grace is in respect of stronger Grace, but that weak Grace is strong and mighty in comparison of counterfeit Grace: Now I do not bid thee try the truth of thy Grace by such a power as is peculiar to stronger Grace, but by that power which will distinguish it from false; true Grace, when weakest, is stronger than false when strongest. There is a Principle of divine Life in it, which the other hath not: Now Life, as it gives Excellency (a Flea or Fly by reason of its life, is more excellent than the Sun in all its Glory) so it gives strength. The slow motion of a living man (though so feeble that he cannot go a furlong in a day) yet coming from Life, imports more strength than is in a ship, which (though it sails swiftly) hath its motion from without. Thus possibly an hypocrite may exceed the true Christian in the bulk and out-side of a Duty; yet because his strength is not from Life, but from some Wind and Tide abroad that carries him, and the Christians is from an inward Principle, therefore the Christians weakness is stronger than the hypocrite in his greatest enlargements. I shall name but two Acts of Grace when weakest, whereby the Christian exceeds the hypocrite in all his best array. You will say, then Grace is at a weak stay indeed, when the Christian is perswaded to commit a sin, a

great sin, such a one as possibly a carnal person would not have said it of him for a great matter, so low may the Tide of Grace fall, yet true Grace at such an ebb will appear of greater strength and force than the other.

First, This Principle of Grace will never leave till the soul weeps bitterly with *Peter*, that it hath offended so good a God. Speak, O ye hypocrites, can you shew one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? possibly ye may weep to see the bed of sorrow which your sins are making for you in Hell; but ye never loved God so well, as to mourn for the injury ye have done the Name of God. It is a good Gloss *Augustine* hath upon *Esaie's* tears, Heb. 12. *Fluit quod perdidit, non quod vendidit.* He wept that he lost the Blessing, not that he sold it. Thus we see an Excellency of the Saints sorrow above the hypocrites. The Christian by his sorrow shews himself a Conquerour of that sin, which even now overcame him, while the Hypocrite by his pride shews himself a slave to a worse Lust, than that he resists. While the Christian commits

a sin he hates it; whereas the other loves it while he forbears it.

Secondly, When true Grace is under the foot of a temptation, yet then it will stir up in the heart a vehement desire of revenge, like a Prisoner in his Enemies hand, who is thinking and plotting how to get out, and what he will do when out, waiting and longing every moment for his delivery, that he may again take up Arms; O God, remember me, saith *Sampson*, this once I pray thee, and strengthen me, that I may be at once avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes, Judges 16. 27. Thus prays the gracious soul, that God would but spare him a little, and strengthen him but once before he dies, that he may be avenged on his Pride, Unbelief, and those sins whereby he hath most dishonoured his God; but a false heart is so far from studying Revenge, that he rather swells like the Sea, against the Law, which banks his Lust in, and is angry with God, who hath made sin such a Leap, that he must hazard his soul if he will have it.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Entireness of our Furniture, It must be the whole Armour of God.

3. The third Branch in the Saints Furniture is, the entireness thereof, *The whole Armour of God.* The Christians Armour must be compleat, and that in a threefold respect.

SECT. I.

First, He must be armed in every part *cap-a-pe*, soul and body, the powers of the one, and senses of the other, not any part left naked. A Dart may fly in at a little hole (like that which brought a message of death to *Ahab*, through the joints of his Harness) and Satan is such an Archer, who can shoot at penny-breadth. If all the man be armed, and only the eye left without, Satan can soon shoot his Fire-balls of Lust in at that loop-hole, which shall set the whole house on a flame. Eve look'd but on the Tree, and a poisonous dart struck her to the heart. If the eye be shut, and the ear be open to corrupt Communication, Satan will soon wriggle in at this hole; if all the outward senses be guarded, and the heart not kept with all diligence, he will soon by his own thoughts be betrayed into Satans hands. Our enemies are on every side, and so must our Armour be, *on the right hand and on the left*, 2 Cor. 6. 7. The Apostle calls sin *the enemy*, an Enemy that surrounds us. If there be any part of the Line unguarded or weakly provided, there Satan falls on; we see the enemy often enter the City at one side, whilst he is beat back on the other, for want of care to keep the whole Line. Satan divides his temptations into several Squadrons, one he employs to assault here, another to storm there. We read of fleshly wickedness, and spiritual wickedness; whilst thou repellst Satan tempting thee to fleshly wickedness, he may be entering thy City at

the other Gate of spiritual wickedness. Perhaps thou hast kept thy integrity in the practical part of thy Life; but what Armour hast thou to defend thy head, thy Judgement? If he surprize thee here, corrupting that with some error, then thou wilt not long hold out in thy practice. He that could not get thee to prophane the Sabbath among Sensualists and Atheists, will under the disguise of such a corrupt Principle as Christian Liberty prevail. Thus we see what need we have of universal Armour, in regard of every part.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The Christian must be in compleat Armour, in regard of the several pieces and weapons, that make up the whole Armour of God. Indeed there is a Concatenation of Graces, they hang together like Links in a Chain, Stones in an Arch, Members in the Body; prick one Vein, and the Blood of the whole Body may run out at that Sluce; neglect one Duty, and no other will do us good. The Apostle *Peter*, in his Second Epistle, chap. 1. v. 5, 6, 7. presseth the Christian to a joint endeavour, to encrease the whole body of Grace; indeed that is health when the whole body thrives. Add (saith he) to your Faith *Virtue*; Faith is the File-leading Grace. Well, hast thou Faith? add *Virtue*: True Faith is of a working, stirring Nature; without good works it is dead or dying. *Fides pinguescit operibus, Luther.* 'Tis kept in plight and heart by a holy life, as the flesh which plaisters over the frame of mans body, though it receive his heat from the Vitals within, yet helps to preserve the very Life of those Vitals: thus good works and gracious actions have their Life from Faith, yet are neces-

* 2 Peter 1/5-6-7

necessary helps to preserve the life of Faith; thus we see sometimes the Child nursing the Parent that bare it, and therein performs but his Duty. Thou art fruitful in good works, yet thou art not out of the Devils shot, except thou addest to thy *Vertue, Knowledge*. This is the Candle without which Faith cannot see to do its work. Art thou going to give an Alms? if it be not *oculata Charitas*, if Charity hath not this eye of Knowledge to direct when, how, what, and to whom thou art to give, thou maist at once wrong God, the person thou relievest, and thy self. Art thou humbling thy self for thy sin? for want of knowledge in the tenour of the Gospel, Satan may play upon thy ignorance, and either persuade thee thou art not humbled enough, when God knows, thou art almost quakkled with thy tears, and even carried down by the impetuous torrent of thy sorrow into despair, or else shewing thee thy blubber'd face, may flatter thee into a carnal confidence of thy humiliation. Perhaps thou feelest the name of God dishonoured in the place where thou livest, and thy spirit is stirred within thee, (as *Paul at Athens*) now if Knowledge fits not in the saddle to rein and bridle in thy Zeal, thou wilt be soon carried over Hedge and Ditch, till thou fallest into some Precipice or other by thy irregular acting. Neither is Knowledge enough, except thou beest armed with *Temperance*, which (I conceive) is that Grace, whereby the Christian (as Master of his own House) so orders his Affections (like servants to Reason and Faith) that they do not irregularly move, or inordinately lash out into desires of, cares for, or joy in the Creature-comforts of this life, without which Satan will be too hard for thee. The Historian tells us, that in one of the famous Battels between the *English and French*, that which lost the *French* the *Days*, was a shower of *English Arrows*, which did so gall their Horses, as put the whole Army into disorder, their Horses knowing no Ranks, did tread down their own men. The Affections are but as the Horse to the Rider; on which Knowledge should be mounted; if Satans barbed Arrows light on them, so that the desires of the Creature prove unruly, and juggle with thy desires of Christ, thy care to keep thy Credit or Estate, put thy care to keep a good Conscience to disorder; and thy carnal joy in Wife and Child trample down, or get before thy joy in the Lord; judge on which side Victory is like to fall. Well, suppose thou marchest provided thus far in goodly array towards Heaven, while thou art swimming in prosperity, must thou not also provide for foul way and weather, I mean, an afflicted estate? Satan will line the Hedges with a thousand temptations, when thou comest into the narrow Lanes of Adversity, where thou canst not run from this Fort of Temptation, as in the Champaign of Prosperity. Possibly thou that didst escape the snare of an alluring world, maist be dismounted by the same when it frowns; though Repentance kept thee from being drunk with the sweet Wines of those pleasures, yet for want of *Patience*, thou maist be drunk with the Wine of affliction which is in afflictions hand. Therefore, saith the Apostle, *to Temperance, add Patience*; either possess thy self in patience, or else some raving

Devil of Discontent will possess thee. An impatient soul in affliction is a Bedlam in Chains; yea, too like the Devil in his Chains, that rageth against God whilst he is fettered by him. Well, hast thou patience? an excellent Grace indeed, but not enough; thou must be a pious man as well as a patient. Therefore, saith the Apostle, *To Patience add Godliness*. There is an Atheistical stupid patience, and there is a godly Christian Patience: Satan numbs the Conscience of the one, and no wonder he complains not that feels not; but the Spirit of Christ sweetly calms the other, not by taking away the sense of pain, but by overcoming it with the sense of his Love. Now godliness comprehends the whole Worship of God, inward and outward. If thou beest never so exact in thy Morals, and not a Worshipper of God, then thou art an Atheist. If thou dost worship God, and that devoutly, but not by Scripture-rule, thou art an Idolater. If according to the Rule, but not in spirit and truth, then thou art an Hypocrite, and so fallest into the Devils mouth. Or if thou dost give God one piece of his Worship, and deniest another, still Satan comes to his Market, Prov. 28.9. *He that turneth back his ear from hearing the Law, his prayer is an abomination to the Lord*. Yet (Christian) all thy Armour is not on. Thy Godliness indeed would suffice, wert thou to live in a world by thy self, or hadst nothing to do but immediate communion with God. But (Christian) thou must not always dwell on this Mount of immediate worship, and when thou descendest, thou hast many Brethren and Servants to thy Father, who live with thee in the same Family; and thou must comport thy self becomingly, or else thy Father will be angry. First, Thou hast Brethren, heirs of the same promise with thee, therefore thou must add to holiness *brotherly kindness*. If Satan can set you at odds, he gives a deep wound to your Godliness. You will hardly join hearts in a duty, that cannot join hands in Love. Secondly, There are not only Brethren, but servants, a multitude of prophane carnal ones, who though they never had the names of Sons and Daughters, yet retain to Gods Family, and thy Heavenly Father will have thee walk unblameably, yea, winningly to those that are without: which that thou maist do, thou must add to brotherly kindness *Charity*; by which Grace thou shalt be willing to do good to the worst of men. When they curse thee, thou must pray for them; yea, pray for no less than a Christ; a Heaven for them. *Father, forgive them*, said Christ, while they were raking in his side for his Heart-blood. And truly I am persuaded the want of this last piece of Armour hath given Satan great advantage in these our times. We are so afraid our Charity should be too broad, whereas in this sense, if it be not as wide as the world, it is too strait for the Command which bids us *do good to all*. May not we Ministers be charged with the want of this? when the strain of our Preaching is solely directed to the Saints, and no pains taken in rescuing poor captived Souls, yet uncalled out of the Devils Clutches, who may hale them to Hell without any disturbance, while we are comforting the Saints, and preaching their Priviledges, but in the mean time let the ignorant be ignorant still, and the prophane

phane still, for want of a compassionate Charity to their souls, which would excite us to the reproofing and exhorting of them, that they might also be brought into the way of Life, as well as the Saints encouraged, who are walking therein. We are stewards to provide bread for the Lords house; the greatest part of our Hearers cannot, must not have the Childrens Bread, and shall we therefore give them no portion at all? Christs Charity pitied the multitude, to whom in his publick preaching he made special application, as in that famous Sermon, most part of which is spent in rowling up the sleepy consciences of the hypocritical Pharisees, by those Thunder-claps of Woes and Curses so often denounced against them, *Mat. 23*. Again, how great a lyantage hath Satan from the want of this Charity in our Families? Is it not observed how little care is taken by professing Governours of such Societies, for the instructing their youth? Nay, 'tis a Principle which some have drunk in, that 'tis not their duty. O where is their Charity in the mean time, when they can see Satan come within their own walls, and let him drive a Child, a Servant, in their ignorance and prophaneness to hell, and not so much as fall out upon this Enemy by a word of Reproof or Instruction, to rescue their silly souls out of the Murtherers hands? We must leave them to their liberty forsooth, and that is as fair play as we can give the Devil; give but corrupt nature enough of this Rope, and it will soon strangle the very Principles of God and Religion in their tender years.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, The entireness of the Saints Armour may be taken not only for every part and piece of the Saints Furniture, but for the compleateness and perfection of every piece. As the Christian is to endeavour after every Grace, so is he to press after the advance and encrease of every Grace, even to perfection it self; as he is to add to his Faith Virtue, so he is to add Faith to Faith, he is ever to be compleating of his Grace. It is that which is frequently prest upon Believers, *Matth. 5. 48. Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. And purifie your selves as God is pure.* Where we have an exact Copy set, not as if we could equalize that purity and perfection which is in God, but to make us strive the more, when we shall see how infinitely short we fall of our Copy when we write the fairest hand. So James 1. 3. *Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be entire, wanting nothing, or wanting in nothing.* Thou, who makest a hard shift to carry a little burden with thy little patience, wouldst sink under a greater, therefore there is need that patience should be ever perfecting, lest at last we meet a burden too heavy for our weak shoulders. Take a few Reasons why the Christian should be thus compleating of his Grace.

First, Because Grace is subject to decays, and there ever needs compleating, as in an Army, especially which often engageth in Battel, their Arms are battered and broken, one man hath his Helmet bent, another his Sword gapt, a third his Pistol unfix'd; and therefore Recruits are ever necessary.

In one temptation the Christian hath his Helmet of Hope beaten off his head, in another his patience hard put to it. The Christian had need have an Armour-shop at hand to make up his loss, and that speedily, for Satan is most like to fall on when the Christian is least prepared to receive his Charge. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you;* he knew they were at that time weakly provided, (Christ their Captain now to be taken from the Head of their Troop, discontents among themselves, striving who should be greatest, and their Recruits of stronger Grace, which the Spirit was to bring, not yet come.) Now he hath a design to surprize them, and therefore Christ carefully to prevent him, promiseth speedily to dispatch his Spirit for their supply, *Acts 1. 4.* and in the mean time sends them to *Jerusalem*, to stand as it were in a body in their joint supplications, upon their guard, while he comes to their relief, shewing us in the weakness of our Graces what to do, and whither to go for supply.

Secondly, Because Satan is compleating his skill and wrath. 'Tis not for nought that he is called the old Serpent, subtle by nature, but more by experience; wrathful by nature, yet every day more and more enraged; like a Bull, the longer he is baited, the more fury he shews. And therefore we who are to grapple with him, now his time is so short, had need come well appointed into the Field.

3. It is the end of all Gods Dispensations, to compleat his Saints in their Graces and Comforts. Wherefore doth he lop and prune by afflictions, but to *purge, that they may bring forth more fruit, Jam. 5. 2.* (that is fuller and fairer) *Tribulation works Patience, Rom. 5. 3.* 'Tis Gods appointment for that end. *It works,* that is, it increaseth the Saints patience; it enrageth indeed the wicked, but meekens the Saints. 'Tis his design in the Gospel preached, to carry on his Saints *from faith to faith, Rom. 1. 17.* And accordingly he hath furnished the Church with Instruments, and those with Gifts, for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ, *Eph. 4. 14.* Wherefore doth the Scaffold stand, and the Workman on it, if the buildings go not up? For us not to advance under such means, is to make void the counsel of God. Therefore the Apostle blames the Christian Jews, *Heb. 5. 12.* for their non-proficiency in the School of Christ, *When for the time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.*

Use. O how few are there who endeavour thus to promote in their spiritual state, and labour to perfect what is yet lacking in their Knowledge, Patience, and the rest. First, Tell some of adding Faith to Faith, one degree of Grace to another, and you shall find they have more mind to join house to house, and lay field to field; their souls are athirst, ever gaping for more, but of what? not of Christ, or Heaven: It is earth, earth, they never think they have enough of, till death comes and stops their mouth with a Shovel-full, digg'd out of their own Grave. What a tormenting life must they needs have, who are always crying for more weight, and yet cannot press their covetous desires to

to death? O Sirs, the only way (if men would believe it) to quench this thirst to the Creature, were to enkindle another after Christ and Heaven. Get but a large heart vehemently thirsting after these, and the other will die alone. As the Feavourish thirst doth when Nature comes to her temper. Secondly, Others labour not thus to perfect Grace, because they have a conceit they are perfect already, and upon this fancy throw away Praying, Hearing, and all other Ordinances, as strings for those Babes in Grace to be carried by, who are not arrived to their high attainments. O what Fools does Pride make men! Truly Heaven were no such desirable place, if we should be no more perfect than thus, a sort of people that are too high for this world, and too low for another. The way by which God cures this phrensie of Pride, we have in these days seen to be something like that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, to give them a heart of a Beast (I mean) for a time, suffer them to fall into beastly practices, by which he shews them how far they are from that perfection they dreamed of so vainly. Thirdly, Others who have true Grace, and desire the advancement of it, yet are discouraged in their endeavour for more, from too deep a sense of their present penury. Bid some such labour to get more power of corruption, more Faith on, and Love to God, that they may be able to do the will of God cheerfully, and suffer it in the greatest afflictions patiently, yea, thankfully, and they will never believe, that they whose Faith is so weak, and Love so chill, and Stock so little in

hand, should ever attain to any thing like such a pitch. You may as well persuade a Beggar with one poor penny in his Purse, that if he will go and trade with that, he shall come to be *Lord Mayor of London* before he die. But why, poor hearts, should you thus despise the day of small things? Do you not see a little grain of Mustard-seed spread into a Tree, and weak Grace compar'd to it for its growth at last, as well as littleness at first? Darest thou say thou hast no Grace at all? If thou hast but any, (though the least that ever any had to begin with) I dare tell thee that he hath done more for thee in that, than he should in making that which is now so weak, as perfect as the Saints Grace is now in Heaven. First, He hath done more, considering it as an act of power. There is a greater Gulph between no Grace and Grace, than between weak Grace and strong, between a *Chaos* and nothing, than between a *Chaos* and this beautiful Frame of Heaven and Earth. The first days work of both Creations is the greatest. Secondly, Consider it as an Act of Grace, it is a greater mercy to give the first Grace of Conversion, than to crown that with Glory. It is more Grace and Condescent in a Prince to marry a poor Damsel, than having married her, to clothe her like a Princess; he was free to do the first or not; but his Relation to her pleads strongly for the other. God might have chosen whether he would have given thee Grace or no, but having done this, thy relation to Him and his Covenant also do oblige him to add more and more, till he hath fitted thee as a Bride for himself in Glory.

CHAP. V.

Of the use of our Spiritual Armour, or the exercise of Grace.

THe fourth and last Branch in the Saints Furniture is, the use they are to make thereof, ἐν δουλείᾳ τῇ πανοπλίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ: *Put on the whole Armour of God.* Briefly, what is this duty, *Put on*? These being Saints (many of them at least) he writes to, 'tis not only putting on by Conversion, what some of them might not yet have; but also, he means they should exercise what they have. It is one thing to have Armour in the house, and another thing to have it buckled on; to have Grace in the Principle, and Grace in the Act. So that the Instruction will be,

Dolt. It is not enough to have Grace, but this Grace must be kept in exercise. The Christian Armour is made to be worn: no laying down, or putting off our Armour till we have done our warfare, and finish our course. Our Armour and our Garment of flesh go off together; then indeed will be no need of watch and ward, Shield or Helmet. Those military Duties and Field-Graces (as I may call Faith, Hope, and the rest) they shall be honourably discharged. In Heaven we shall appear, not in Armour, but in Robes of Glory; but here they are to be worn night and day, we must walk, work and sleep in them, or else we are not true Souldiers of Christ. This *Paul* professeth to en-

deavour, Acts 24. 16. *Herein do I exercise myself, to have alwayes a Conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.* Here we have this holy man at his Arms, training and exercising himself in his postures, like some Souldier by himself handling his Pike, and inuring himself before the Battel. Now the Reason of this is,

SECT. I.

First, Christ commands us to have our Armour on, our Grace in exercise, Luke 12. 35. *Let your Loins be girded about, and your Lights burning.* Christ speaks either in a Martial phrase, as to Souldiers, or in a Domestick, as to Servants: If as to Souldiers, then Let your Loins be girded, and your Lights burning, is, that we should be ready for a March, having our Armour on (for the Belt goes over all) and our Match light, ready to give fire at the first Alarm of Temptation. If as to Servants, which seems more natural, then he bids us (as our Master that is gone abroad) not through sloth or sleep put off our Cloaths, and put out our Lights, but stand ready to open when he shall come, though at Midnight. 'Tis not fit the Master should stand at the door knocking, and the Servant within sleeping; indeed there is no duty

duty the Christian hath in charge but implies this daily exercise; *Pray*, but how? *without ceasing*. *Rejoice*, but when? *evermore*. *Give thanks*, for what? *in everything*, 1 Thes. 5. 16, 17. The Shield of Faith, and Helmet of Hope, we must hold them to the end, 1 Pet. 1. 13. The sum of all which is, that we should walk in the constant exercise of these Duties and Graces. Where the Souldier is placed, there he stands, and must neither stir nor sleep till he be brought off. When Christ comes, that soul shall only have his blessing whom *he finds so doing*.

Secondly, Satans advantage is great when Grace is not in exercise. When the Devil found Christ so ready to receive his Charge, and repel his temptation, he soon had enough; it is said, *He departed for a season*, Luke 4. 13. as if in his shameful retreat he had comforted himself with hopes of surprizing Christ unawares, at another season more advantageous to his design; and we find him coming again, in the most likely time indeed to have attained his end, had his Enemy been Man and not God. Now if this bold Fiend did thus watch and observe Christ from time to time, doth it not behove thee to look about thee, lest he take thy Grace at one time or other napping? What he misleth now by thy watchfulness, he may gain anon by thy negligence. Indeed he hopes thou wilt be tired out with continual Duty: Surely, faith Satan, (when he sees the Christian up, and fervent in duty) this will not hold long. When he finds him tender of Conscience, and scrupulous of occasion to sin, This is but for a while, ere long I shall have him unbend his Bow, and unbuckle his Armour, and then have at him. Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy House and Closet, and though he hath not a Key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next Room to it, and lightly hear what is whispered there. He hunts the Christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth but smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint; if but one door be unbolted, one work unarmed, one Grace off its Carriage, here is advantage enough.

Thirdly, Because it is so awky a business, and hard a work, to recover the activity of Grace once lost, and to revive a duty in disuse: *I have put off my Coat*, faith the Spouse, Cant. 5. 3. She had given way to a lazy distemper, was laid upon her Bed of Sloth, and how hard is it to raise her? Her beloved is at the door, beseeching her by all the means of love, which might bring to her remembrance the near relation between them; *My Sister, my Love, my Dove, open to me*; and yet she riseth not: He tells her, *His Locks are filled with the drops of the night*; yet she stirs not: what is the matter? Her Coat was off, and she is loth to put it on; she had given way to her sloth, and now she knows not how to shake it off: She could have been glad to have her Beloveds company, if himself would have opened the door; and he desired as much hers, if she would rise to let him in; and upon these terms they part. The longer a soul hath neglected duty, the more ado there is to get it taken up; partly through shame, the soul having plaid the truant, now knows not how to look God on the face; and partly from the difficulty

of the work, being double to what another finds, that walks in the exercise of his Grace; here is all out of order. It requires more time and pains for him to tune his Instrument, than for another to play the Lesson. He goes to duty as to a new work, as a Scholar that hath not look'd on his book some while, his Lesson is almost out of his head; whereas another that was but even now conning it over, hath it *ad unguem*. Perhaps 'tis an Affliction thou art called to bear, and thy patience unexercised, little or no thoughts thou hast had for such a time (while thou wert frisking in a full pasture) and now thou kickest and flingest, even as a *Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*, Jer. 31. 18. Whereas another goes meekly and patiently under the like cross, because he had been stirring up his patience, and fitting the yoke to his neck. You know what a confusion there is in a Town, at some sudden Alarm in the dead of the night, the enemy at the Gates, and they asleep within, O what a cry is there heard! one wants his Cloaths, another his Sword, a third knows not what to do for Powder; thus in a fright they run up and down, which would not be if the enemy did find them upon their Guard, orderly waiting for his approach. Such a Hubbub there is in a soul that keeps not his Armour on, this piece and that will be to seek when he should use it.

Fourthly, We must keep Grace in exercise in respect of others, our fellow-souldiers. *Paul* had this in his eye, when he was exercising himself to keep a good Conscience, that he might not be a scandal to others. The cowardise of one may make others run; the ignorance of one souldier that hath not skill to handle his Arms, may do mischief to his fellow-souldiers about him, some have shot their Friends for their Enemies; the unwise walking of one Professor makes many other fare the worse. But say, thou dost not fall so far as to become a scandal, yet thou canst not be so helpful to thy fellow-brethren as thou shouldst. God commanded the *Reubenites* and *Gadites* to go before their Brethren ready armed, until the Land was conquered. Thus, Christian, thou art to be helpful to thy fellow-brethren, who have not (it may be) that settlement of peace in their spirit as thy self, not that measure of Grace or Comfort: Thou art to help such weak ones, and go before them (as it were) arm'd for their defence: Now if thy Grace be not exercised, thou art so far unserviceable to thy weak Brother. Perhaps thou art a Master or a Parent who hast a Family under thy wing, they fare as thou thrive; if thy heart be in a holy frame, they fare the better in the duties thou performest; if thy heart be dead and down, they are losers by the hand. So that as the Nurse eats the more for the Babes sake she suckles, so shouldst thou for their sake who are under thy tuition, be more careful to exercise thy own Grace and cherish it.

SECT. II.

Object. O but (may some say) this is a hard work indeed, our Armour never off, our Grace alwaies in exercise? Did God ever mean Religion should be such a toilsom business as this would make it?

Answer.

Ans. Thou speakest like one of the foolish world, and shewest thyself a meer stranger to the Christians life that speakest thus: a burden to exercise Grace! why? it is no burden to exercise the Acts of Nature; to eat, to drink, to walk, all delightful to us in our right temper; if any of these be otherwise, Nature is oppress'd; if stuff, then difficult to breath; if sick, then the meat offensive we eat: So take a Saint in his right temper, 'tis his joy to be employed in the exercise of his Grace in this or that duty, *Psal. 122. 1.*

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord, his heart leapt at the motion. When any occasion diverts him from Communion with God, though he likes it never so well, yet it is unwelcome and unpleasing to him, as you who are used to be in your shops from morning to night, how tedious is it for you to be abroad some days, though among good Friends, because you are not where your Work and Calling lies? A Christian in duty is one in his calling, as it were in his shop where he should be, yea where he would be, and therefore far from being tedious. Religion is so burdenfom to none, as to those who are infrequent in the exercise of it. Use makes heavy things light; we hardly feel the weight of our Cloaths, because fitted to us, and worn daily by us; whereas the same weight on our shoulder would trouble us. Thus the grievousness of Religious duties to carnal ones, is taken away in the Saints, partly by the fitness of them to the Saints Principles, as also by their daily exercise in them. The Disciples, when newly entered into the ways of Christ, could not pray much, or fast long: the Bottles were new, and that wine too strong; but by that they had walked a few years, they grew mighty in both. Dost thou complain that heaven way is rugged? be the offer walking in it and that will make it smooth.

But secondly, Were this constant exercise of Grace more troublefom to the flesh, (which is the only Complainer) the sweet advantage that accrues by this to the Christian, will abundantly recompence all his labour and pains.

First, the exercise of thy Grace will encrease thy Grace; *The diligent hand makes rich.* A provident man counts that lost which might have been got, not only when his money is stole out of his Chest, but when it lies there un-improved. Such a Commodity (saith the Tradesman) if I had bought with that money in my Bags, would have brought me in so much gain, which is now lost; so the Christian may say, My dawning knowledge, had I followed on to know the Lord, might have spread to broad day: *I have more understanding,* saith David, *than all my teachers.* How came he by it? he'll tell you in the next words, *for thy testimonies are my meditations,* *Psal. 119. 99.* He was more in the exercise of Duty and Grace. The best wits are not alwaies the greatest Scholars, because their study is not suitable to their Parts; neither alwaies proves he the richest man, that sets up with the greatest stock. A little Grace well attended by daily exercise will encrease, when greater, neglected, shall decay.

Secondly, As exercise encreaseth, so it evidenceth Grace. Would a man know whether he be lame

or no, let him rise, he'll be sooner satisfied by one turn in a Room, than by a long dispute and he sit still. Wouldst thou know whether thou lovest God? Be frequent in exerting acts of Love, the more the fire is blown up, the sooner 'tis seen; and so of all other Graces. Sometimes the Soul is questioning whether it hath any Patience, any Faith, till God comes and puts him into an afflicted estate (where he must either exercise this Grace, or perish) and then it appears like one that thinks he cannot swim, yet being thrown into the River, then uniting all his strength, he makes a shift to swim to Land, and sees what he can do. How oft have we heard Christians say, I thought I could never have endured such a pain, trusted God in such a strait; but now God hath taught me what he can do for me, what he hath wrought in me; and this thou mightest have known before, if thou wouldst have often stirred up and exercised thy Grace.

Thirdly, Exercise of Grace doth invite God to communicate himself to such a soul. God sets the Christian at work, and then meets him in it. *Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.* He sets a soul a reading as the Eunuch, and then joinsto his Chariot a praying, and then comes the Messenger from Heaven, *O Daniel greatly beloved.* The Spouse who lost her Beloved on her Bed, finds him as she comes from the Sermon, *Cant. 3. 4. It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loved.*

SECT. III.

Use. 1. This falls heavy on their heads, who are so far from exercising Grace, that they walk in the exercise of their Lusts; their hearts are like a Glass house, the fire is never out, the Shop windows never shut, they are alwaies at work, hammering some wicked Project or other upon the Anvil of their hearts; there are some who give scope to their lusts, what their wretched hearts will, they shall have; they cocker their Lusts, as some their Children, deny them nothing, who (as it is recorded of David to Adonijah) do not so much as say to their souls, Why dost thou so? why art thou so proud, so covetous, so prophane? They spend their days in making provision for these Guests: as at some Inns, the house never cools, but as one Guest goes out, another comes in; as one Lust is served, another is calling for attendance; as some exercise Grace more than others, so there are greater Traders in sin, that set more a work than others, and return more wrath in a day, than others in a month. Happy are such, (in comparison of these) who are chain'd up by Gods restraint upon their outward man or inward, they cannot drive on so furiously as these, who by health of body, power, and greatness in place, riches and treasures in their Coffers, nummets and dedolency in their Consciences, are hurried on to fill up the measure of their sins. We read of the Assyrian, that he enlarged his heart as bell, stretching out his desires as men do their Bags that are thrack'd full with money to hold more, *Hab. 2. 3.* Thus the Adulterer, as if his body were not quick enough to execute the commands of his Lust, stirs it up by sending

sending forth his amorous glances, which come home laden with *adultery*, blows up this fire with unchast Sonnets and Belly-charge, proper Fuel for the Devils Kitchen; and the malicious man, who that he may lose no time from his Lust, is a tearing his Neighbour in pieces as he lies on his Bed, cannot sleep unless some such bloody sacrifice be offered to his ravening Lust. O how may this shame the Saints! How oit is your Zeal so hot, that you cannot sleep till your hearts have been in Heaven, as you are on your beds, and there pacified with the sight of your dear Saviour, and some Embraces of Love from Him?

Use 2. It reproves those who flout and mock at the Saints, while exercising their Graces; none jeer'd as the Saint in his Calling. Men may work in their shops, and every one follow his Calling as diligently as they please, and no wonder made of this by those that pass by in the streets; but let the Christian be seen at work for God, in the exercise of any Duty or Grace, and he is hooted at, despised, yea hated. Few so bad indeed, but seem to like Religion in the notion; they can commend a Sermon of Holiness, like a Discourse of God, or Christ in the Pulpit; but when these are really set before their eyes, as they sparkle in a Saints conversation, they are very contemptible and hateful to them; this living and walking holiness bites: and though they liked the Preachers Art, in painting forth the same in his Discourse, yet now they run from them, and spit at them; this exercise of Grace offends the prophane heart, and stirs up the enmity that lies within: As *Michal*, she could not but flout *David* to see him dancing before the Ark. He that commended the Preacher for making a learned Discourse of Zeal, will rail on a Saint, expressing an act of Zeal in his place and calling; now Grace comes too near him. A naughty heart must stand at some distance from Holiness, that the beams thereof may not bear too strongly on his Conscience, and so he likes it. Thus the Pharisees, the Prophets of old, these were holy men in their account, and they can lavish out their money on their Tombs in honour of them: but Christ (who was more than all of them) he is scorned and hated: What's the myserie of this? The reason was, these Prophets are off the Stage, and Christ on. *Pascitur in vivis livor, post fata quiescit.*

Use 3. Try by this whether you have Grace or no, dost thou walk in the exercise of thy Grace? He that hath Cloaths, surely will wear them, and not be seen naked. Men talk of their Faith, Repentance, Love of God; these are precious Graces, but why do they not let us see these walking abroad in their daily conversation? Surely if such Guests were in thy soul, they would look out sometime by the Window, and be seen abroad in this duty, and that holy action; Grace is of a stirring nature, and not such a dead thing (like an Image) which you may lock up in a Chest, and none shall know what God you worship; no, Grace will shew it self, it will walk with you in all places and companies, it will buy with you, and sell for you, it will have a hand in all your enterprizes; it will comfort you when you are sincere and faithful for God, and it

will complain and chide you when you are otherwise, go to, stop its mouth, and heaven shall hear its voice, it will groan, mourn, and strive, even as a living man when you would smother him. I'll as soon believe the man to be alive, that lies peaceably as he is nail'd up in his Coffin, without strife or bustle, as that thou hast Grace, and never exercise it in any act of spiritual life. What man! hast thou Grace, and carried so peaceably, as a Fool to the stocks, by thy Lust? Why hangest thou there nailed to thy Lust? If thou hast Grace, come down and we will believe it; but if thou beest such a tame slave, as to sit still under the command of Lust, thou deceivest thy self. Hast thou Grace, and shew none of it in the condition thou art placed in? May be thou art rich, dost thou shew thy humility towards those that are beneath thee? Dost thou shew a heavenly mind breathing after heaven more than earth? It may be thy heart is puffed with thy Estate, that thou lookest on the poor as creatures of some lower species than thy self, and disdainest them, and as for heaven thou thinkest not of it: Like that wicked Prince, that said, *He would lose his part in Paradise rather than in Paris.* Art thou poor, why dost not exercise Grace in that condition? Art thou contented, diligent? May be in stead of contentation, thou repinest, canst not see a fair Lace on thy rich Brothers Cloth, but grudgest it, instead of concurring with Providence by diligence to supply thy wants: Thou art ready to break through the hedge into thy Neighbours fat pasture, thus serving thy own turn by a sin, rather than waiting for Gods Blessing on thy honest diligence: if so, be not angry, we call thee by thy right name, or at least question whether we may stile thee Christian, whose carriage is so cross to that sacred name, which is too holy to be written on a rotten Post.

Use 4. Be exhorted, O ye Saints of God, to walk in the exercise of Grace. It is the Ministers duty with the continual breath of exhortation, and if need be, reproof, to keep this heavenly fire clear on the Saints Altar. Peter saw it necessary to have Bellows always in his hands, 2 Pet. 1. 12. *I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of those things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth (that shall not take him off) as long as he is in this Tabernacle, he saith he will stir them up, and be putting them in remembrance, v. 13.* There is a sleepy disease we are subject to in this Life; Christ, though he had rowzed up his Disciples twice, yet takes them napping the third time. Either exercise thy Grace, or Satan will act thy Corruption, as one Bucket goes down, the other riseth; there is a body of sin within, which like a malignant party watcheth for such a time to step into the Saddle, and 'tis easier to keep them down, than to pull them down. Thy time is short, and thy way long, thou hadst best put on, lest thou meanest to be overtaken with night, before thou gettest within sight of thy Fathers house. How uncomfortable 'tis for a Traveller in Heaven Road (above an other) to go potching in the dark, many can with aking hearts tell thee. And what hast thou here to mind like this? Are they worldly cares and pleasures? Is it wisdom to lay out so much cost

cost on thy Tenement, which thou art leaving, and forget what thou must carry with thee? Before the fruit of these be ripe which thou art now planting, thy self may be rotting in the grave. *Time is short*, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7. 29. *Time is short*. The world is near its Port, and therefore God hath contracted the sails of mans life; but a while, and there will not be a point to chuse whether we had wives or not, riches or not, but there will be a vast difference between those that had Grace, and those that had not; yea, between those that did drive a quick trade in the exercise thereof, and those that were more remiss; the one shall have an *abundant entrance into Glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 11. while the other shall suffer loss in much of his lading, which shall be cast over-board as Merchandise that will bear no price in that Heavenly Country; yea, while thou art here, others shall fare the better by thy lively graces. Thy cheerfulness and activity in thy heavenly course will help others that travel with thee; he is dull indeed that will not put on, when he sees so much Metal for God in thee who ledest the way. Yea, thy Grace will give a check to the sins of others, who never stand in such awe, as when Grace comes forth and sits like a Ruler in the Gate, to be seen

of all that pass by. The Swearer knows not such Majesty is present, when the Christian is mealy-mouth'd, and so goes on and fears no Colors, whose Grace had it but her Dagger of Zeal ready, and Courage to draw it forth in a wise reproof, would make sin quit the place, and with shame run into its hole, Job 29. 8. *The young men saw me and hid themselves, the Princes refrained talking, and laid their hands on their mouth.* And doth not God deserve the best service thou canst do him in thy generation? Did he give thee Grace to lay it up in a dead stock, and none to be the better? or can you say, that he is wanting to you in his love and mercy? Are they not ever in exercise for your good? Is the eye of Providence ever shut? No, *He remembers not that keeps thee*: Or is it one moment off thee? No, *The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous*; He hath fixed it for ever, and with infinite delight pleaseth himself in the object. When was his ear shut, or his hand, either from receiving thy cries, or supplying thy wants? nay, doth not thy condition take up the thoughts of God, and are they any other than thoughts of peace which he entertains? A few drops of this Oil will keep the wheel in motion.

That ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil.

THese words present us with the reason, why the Christian Souldier is to be thus compleatly armed, *That he may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* The strength of which Argument lies in these two Particulars.

First, the danger, if unarmed, the Enemy is no mean contemptible one, no less than the Devil, set out as a cunning Engineer by his Wiles and Strategems.

Secondly, The certainty of standing against all his wits and wiles, if we be thus armed, That ye may be *able to stand*. As no standing without Armour, so no fear of falling into the Fiends hands if armed.

To begin with the first, the Saints enemy, the Devil described by his wiles *μωδολιαι τῆ διαβολῆς*, properly the Methods of Satan, *μωδολιαι* of *μωδολιαι*, which signifies, that Art and Order one observes in handling a point; we say, such a one is methodical: Now because it shews ingenuity and acuteness of wit so to compose a discourse; therefore it is transferred to expresse the subtilty of Satan in laying of his plots and strategems, in his warlike preparations against the Christian. Indeed the expert Souldier hath his order as well as the Scholar; there is method in forming of an Army, as well as framing an Argument. The note which lies before us is,

Doct. The Devil is a very subtil enemy. The Christian is endangered most by his policy and craft, he is called the old Serpent. The Serpent, subtil above other Creatures, an old Serpent above other Serpents: Satan was too crafty for man in his perfection, much more now in his maimed estate, having never recovered that first crack he got in his understanding by the fall of Adam. And as man hath lost, so Satan hath gained more and more experience; he lost his wisdom indeed as soon as he became a Devil, but ever since he hath increased his craft; though he hath not wisdom enough to do himself good, yet subtilty enough to do others hurt. God shews us where his strength lies, when he promisseth he will *bruise the head of the Serpent*; his head crushed, and he dies presently. Now in handling this point of Satans subtilty, we shall consider him in his two main designs, and therein shew you his wiles and policies. His first main design is, to draw into sin. The second is to accuse, vex, and trouble the Saint for sin. First, Let us consider the Devil as a tempter to sin, and there he shews his wily subtilty in three things.

First, in chusing the most advantageous season for tempting.

Secondly, In managing his temptations, laying them in such a method and form, as shews his craft.

Thirdly, In pitching on fit instruments for his turn, to carry on his design.

CHAP. I.

Of Satans subtilty to chuse out the most advantageous seasons for tempting.

First he shews his subtilty, in chusing the most proper and advantageous seasons for tempting. *To every thing there is a season*, Solomon saith, *Eccles. 3. 1.* that is, a nick of Time, which taken, gives facility and speedy dispatch to a business: And therefore the same wise man gives this reason, why man miscarries so frequently, and is disappointed in his enterprizes, *because he knows not his time*, *Eccles. 9. 11.* he comes when the Bird is flown. A hundred souldiers at one time may turn a Battel, save an Army, when thousands will not do at another. Satan knows when to make his approaches, when (if at any time) he is most likely to be entertained. As *Christ hath the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season* of counsel and comfort, to a doubting, drooping soul, so Satan shews his black Art, and hellish skill, in speaking words of seduction and temptation in season; and a word in season is *a word on its wheels*. I shall give you a view of his subtilty in special seasons, which he chuseth to tempt in.

1. The first season he takes to tempt in is, when newly converted. No sooner is this Child of Grace, the new Creature born, but this Dragon pours a flood of temptation after it. He learnt the *Egyptians* but some of his own craft, when he taught them that bloody and cruel Baptism, which they exercised upon the *Israelitish* Babes, in throwing them into the River as soon as they were born. The first cry of the new Creature gives all the Legions of Hell an Alarm; they are much troubled at it, as *Herod and Jerusalem* were, when Christ was born; and now they sit in Council to take away the life of this new-born King. The Apostles met with more opposition, and persecution in their latter days, when endued with large portions of the Spirit, but with temptations from Satan in their former, when young Converts, as you may observe in the several passages recorded of them. Satan knew Grace within was but weak, and their supplies promised at the Spirits coming, not landed; and when is an enemy more like to carry the Town than in such a low condition? and therefore he tries them all. Indeed the advantages are so many, that we may wonder how the young Convert escapes with his life; Knowledge weak, and so soon led into an error, especially in divided times; when many wayes are held forth, one saying, Here is Christ; another, There is Christ, and the Christian ready to think every one means honestly that comes with good words; as a little Child that hath lost his way to his Fathers house, is prone to follow any that offer him their conduct. Experience of what he knows little; and if *Adam*, whose Knowledge was so perfect, yet was soon cheated (being assaulted before he was well warm in his new possessions) how much more advantage hath Satan of the new Convert? in whom he finds every Grace in so great an indisposition to make resistance, both from its own weakness, and the strength of the contrary corruption,

(which commonly in such is much unmortified) which makes it act with more difficulty and mixture, as in a fire newly kindled, where the Smoke is more than the Flame; or like Beer newly tunnd, which runs thick; so that though there appear more strength of affection in such, that it works over into a greater abundance of duty than in others, yet with more dregs of carnal passion, which Satan knows, and therefore chuseth to stir what he sees troubled already.

2. Secondly, When the Saint is beset with some great Affliction, this is as some blind Lane or solitary place, fit for this Thief to call for his Purse in. An expert Captain first labours to make a breach in the Wall, and then falls on in storming the City. Satan first got power from God to weaken *Job* in his Estate, Children, Health, and other Comforts he had, and now tempts him to Impatience, and what not? He lets Christ fast forty days before he comes, and then he falls to his work: As an Army stays till a Castle be pinch'd for provision within, and then sends a Parley, never more likely to be embraced than in such a strait. A Temptation comes strong, when the way to relief seems to lie through the sin that Satan is wooing to: When one is poor, and Satan comes, What wilt starve rather than step over the Hedge, and steal for thy supply? this is enough to put flesh and blood to the stand.

3. Thirdly, When the Christian is about some notable enterprize for Gods Glory, then Satan will lie like a Serpent in the way, *an Adder in the path, that biteth his horse heels, so that his Rider shall fall backward*. Thus he stood at *Joshuah's* right hand to resist him. The right hand is the working hand, and his standing there implies his desire to hinder him in his Enterprize. Indeed the Devil was never Friend to Temple-work, and therefore that work is so long a doing. What a handsome excuse doth he help the *Jews* unto, *The time is not come*; Gods time was come, but not the Devils, and therefore he helps them to this poor shift, perverting the sense of Providence, as if it were not time, because they were so poor; whereas they thrive no better, because they went no sooner about the work, as God tells them plainly. *Paul* and *Barnabas* had a holy design in their thoughts to go visit the Brethren in every City, and strengthen their Faith; the Devil knew what a blow this might give to his Kingdom, their visiting might hinder him in his Circuit, and he stirs up an unhappy difference between these two holy men, who grow so hot that they part in this storm, *Acts 15. 30.* There were two remarkable periods of Christ's Life, his *Entrée* and *Exit*, his Entrance into his publick Ministry at his Baptism, and his finishing it at his Passion; and at both we have the Devil fiercely encountering him. The more publick thy place, Christian, and the more eminent thy service for God, the more thou must look that the Devil will have some more dangerous design or other

other against thee; and therefore if every private Souldier needs Armour against Satans Bullets of temptation, then the Commanders and Officers who stand in the Front of the Battel, much more.

4. Fourthly, When he hath the presence of some Object to enforce his temptation. Thus he takes Eve when she is near the Tree, and had it in her eye while he should make the motion; that assaulting two Ports at once, it might be the harder for her to hinder the landing of his Temptation; and if Eves eyes did so soon affect her heart with an inordinate desire, then much more now is it easie for him by the presence of the Object, to excite and actuate that Lust which lies dormant in the heart. As Naomi sent her Daughter to lie at Boaz his feet, knowing well, if he endured her there, there were hope that he might take her into his Bed at last: If the Christian can let the Object come so near, Satan will promise himself his Suit may in time be granted. Therefore it should be our care, if we would not yield to the sin, not to walk by, or sit at the door of the occasion. Look not on that beauty with a wandering eye, by which thou wouldst not be taken prisoner; partly not with that in thy thoughts, which thou meanest not to let into thy heart; conversation begets affection. Some by this have been brought to marry those, whom at first they thought they could not have liked.

5. Fifthly, After great manifestations of Gods Love, then the Tempter comes. Such is the weak constitution of Grace, that it can neither well bear smiles nor frowns from God without a snare: As one said of our English Nation, *Totam nec pati potest libertatem nec servitutem*; it cannot well bear liberty nor bondage in the height: So neither can the soul, if God smile and opens himself a little familiarly to us, then we are prone to grow high and wanton; if he frown, then we sink as much in our Faith; thus the one, like fair weather and warm gleams, bring up the Weeds of Corruption; and the other, like sharp Frosts, nip and even kill the Flowers of Grace: The Christian is in danger on both hands, therefore Satan takes this advantage, when the

Christian is flush of comfort, even as a Cheater, who strikes in with some young Heir, when he hath newly received his Rents, and never leaves till he hath eased him of his money: thus Satan lies upon the catch, then to inveigle a Saint into one sin or other, which he knows will soon leak out his joy. Had ever any a larger testimony from Heaven than Peter; Matth. 16. 17. Where Christ pronounceth him blessed, and puts a singular honour upon him, making him the Representative for all his Saints. No doubt this favour to Peter stirred up the envious Spirit sooner to fall upon him. If Josephs party-coloured Coat made the Patriarchs to plot against him their Brother, no wonder malice should prompt Satan to shew his spite, where Christ had set such a mark of Love and Honour; and therefore we find him soon at Peters Elbow, making him his Instrument to tempt his Master, who soon espied his cloven foot, and rebukes Peter with a *Get thee behind me, Satan*. He that seem'd a Rock even now, through Satans policy, is laid a stone of offence for Christ to stumble at. So David, when he had received such wonderful mercies, settled in his Throne with the ruine of his enemies, yea, pardoned for his bloody sin, now ready to lay down his head with peace in the dust: Satan chops in to cloud his clear Evening, and tempts him to number the people; so ambitious is Satan, then chiefly to throw the Saint into the mire of sin, when his Coat is cleaneft.

6. Sixthly, At the hour of death, when the Saint is down and prostrate in his bodily strength, now this Coward falls upon him: 'tis the last Cast indeed he hath for the Game, now or never, overcome him now and ever. As they say of the natural Serpent, *Nunquam nisi moriens producit in longum*; he never is seen at his length till dying; so this mystical Serpent never strains his wits and wiles more, than when his time is thus short. The Saint is even-stepping into Eternity, and now he treads upon his heel, which if he cannot trip up, so as to hinder his arrival in heaven, yet at least to bruise it, that he may go with more pain thither.

CHAP. II.

Satans subtilty in managing his temptations, where several stratagems used by him to deceive the Christian, are laid down.

2. **T**He second way wherein Satan shews his tempting subtilty, is, in those stratagems he useth to deceive the Christian in the act of temptation.

First, He hangs out false Colours, and comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend, so that the Gates are opened to him, and his motions received with applause, before either be discovered; therefore he is said to transform himself into an Angel of light, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Of all plots 'tis most dangerous when he appears in Samuels Mantle, and filvers his foul tongue with fair Language. Thus in point of Error, he corrupts some in their judge-

ment, by commending his notions for special Gospel-truths, and like a cunning Chap-man puts off his old Ware (Errors I mean that have lain long upon his hand) only turning them a little after the mode of the times, and they go for new light; under the skirt of Christian Liberty, he conveys in Libertinism; by crying up the Spirit, he decries and vilifies the Scripture; by magnifying Faith, he labours to undermine Repentance, and blow up good works; by bewailing the corruption of the Church in its administrations, he draws unstable souls from it, and amuseth them, till at last they fall into a *verrigo*, and can see no Church at all in being. And he

he prevails no less on the hearts and lives of men by this wile, than on their judgements. Under the notion of Zeal, he kindles sometimes a dangerous flame of passion and wrath in the heart, which like a rash fire makes the Christians spirit boil over into unchristian desires of, and prayers for revenge where he should forgive, of which we have an instance in the Disciples, *Luke 9. 55*. Where two holy men are desiring that *fire may come down from heaven*. Little did they think from whence they had their Coal that did to heat them, till Christ told them, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of*. Sometimes he pretends pity and natural affection, which in some cases may be good counsel, and all the while he desires to promote Cowardise and sinful self-love, whereby the Christian may be brought to fly from his Colours, shrink from the truth, or decline some necessary duty of his Calling; this his Wile Christ soon spied, when he got *Peter* to be his spokesman, saying, *Master, pity thy self*; who stopt his mouth with that sharp rebuke, *Get thee behind me Satan*. O what need have we to study the Scriptures, our Hearts, and Satans Wiles, that we may not bid this Enemy welcome, and all the while think it's Christ that is our Guest!

A second policy he useth, is, to get intelligence of the Saints Affairs. This is one great Wheel in the Politicians Clock, to have spies in all places, by whom they are acquainted with the counsels and motions of their enemies, and this gives them advantage, as to disappoint their designs, so more safely to compass their own. 'Tis no hard matter for him to play his Game well that sees his enemies hand. *David* knew how the squares went at Court, *Jonathans* Arrows carried him the News, and accordingly he removed his Quarters, and was too hard for his great Enemy *Saul*. Satan is the greatest Intelligencer in the world, he makes it his business to enquire into the inclinations, thoughts, affections, purposes of the Creature, that finding which humour abounds, he may apply himself accordingly, which way the stream goes, that he may open the passage of temptation, and cut the Channel to the fall of the Creatures Affections, and not force it against the Torrent of Nature. Now if we consider but the piercing apprehension of the Angelical nature, how quick he is to take the scent which way the Game goes by a word dropt; the cast of an eye, or such a small matter (signal enough to give him the Alarm) his experience in Heart-Anatomy, having inspected, and (as it were) dissected so many in his long practice, whereby his Knowledge is much perfected, as also his great diligence to add to both these, being as close a Student as ever, considering the Saints, and studying how he may do them a mischief, as we see in *Jobs* case, whom he had so observed, that he was able to give an answer *ex tempore* to God, what *Jobs* state and present posture was, and what might be the most probable means of obtaining his will of him; and besides all this, the correspondence that he hath with those in and about the Christian; from whom he learns much of his state, as *David* did by *Hushai* in *Abjoloms* Council; all these considered, 'tis almost impossible for the Creature to stir out of the Closet of

this heart, but it will be known whither he inclines; some corrupt passion or other will bewray the soul to him, as they did *David* to *Saul*, who told him where he might find him, *in the Wilderness of Engedi*, 1 Sam. 24. 1. Thus will these give intelligence to Satan; and say, If thou wouldst surprize such a one, he is gone that way, you shall have him in the Wood of worldly employments, over head and ears in the desires and cares of this life; see where another sits under such a Bower, delighting himself in this Child, or that Gift, Endowment of mind, or the like, lay but the Lime-twigg there, and you shall soon have him in it. Now Satan having this intelligence, lets him alone to act his part; he sure cannot be at a loss himself, when his Scholars, (the Jesuits I mean) have such agility of mind, to wreath and cast themselves into any form becoming the persons they would seduce. Is Ambition the Lust the heart favours? O the pleasing projects that he will put such upon! How easily having first blown them up with vain hopes, doth he draw them into horrid Sins? Thus *Haman*, that he may have a Monopoly of his Princes Favour, is hurried into that bloody Plot (fatal at last to himself) against the *Jews*. Is Uncleanneſs the Lust after which the Creatures eye wanders? Now he'll be the Pander, to bring him and his Minion together. Thus he finding *Amnon* sick of this disease, sends *Jonadab*, a deep-pated Fellow, 2 Sam. 13. 3: to put this fine device into his head of feigning himself sick, whereby his Sister fell into his snare.

Thirdly, In his gradual Approaches to the soul. When he comes to tempt, he is modest, and asks but a little; he knows he may get that at many times, which he should be denied if he askt all at once. A few are let into a City, when an Army coming in a Body, would be shut out, and therefore that he may beget no suspicion, he presents, may be, a few general Propositions, which do not discover the depth of this Plot; these like Scouts go before, while his whole Body lies hid as it were in some swamp at hand. Thus he wriggled into *Eve* bosom, whom he doth not at first dash bid take and eat; no, he is more mannerly than so; this would have been so hideous, that as the Fish with some sudden noise, by a stone cast into the River, is scared from the Bait, so would she have been affrighted from holding parley with such a one; no, he propounds a question which shall make way for this, *Harb God said? Art not mistaken? Could this be his meaning whose bounty lets thee eat of the rest, to deny thee the best of all?* Thus he digs about, and loosens the Roots of her Faith; and then the Tree falls the easier the next gust of temptation. This is a dangerous policy indeed: Many have yielded to go a mile with Satan, that never intended to go two; but when once on the way, have been allured further and further, till at last they know not how to leave his company. Thus Satan leads poor Creatures down into the depths of sin by winding stairs, that let them not see the bottom whither they are going: First, he presents an object that occasions some thoughts, these set fire on the Affections, and these fume up into the Brain, and cloud the Understanding, which being thus disabled,

disabled, now Satan dares a little more declare himself, and boldly sollicite the Creature to that it would even now have defied. Many who at this day lie in open prophaneness, never thought they should have roll'd so far from their Profession, but Satan beguiled them, poor souls, with their modest beginnings. O Christians, give not place to Satan, no not an inch in his first motions; he that is a Beggar, and a modest one without doors, will command the house if let in; yield at first, and thou givest away thy strength to resist him in the rest; when the Hem is worn, the whole Garment will ravel out, if that be not mended by timely repentance.

The fourth way, wherein Satan shews his subtilty in managing his temptations, is in his Reserves. A wise Captain hath ever some fresh Troops at hand to fall in at a pinch, when other are worsted. Satan is seldom at a loss in this respect; when one temptation is beat back, he soon hath another to fill up the Gap, and make good the Line. Thus he tempts Christ to diffidence and distrust, by bidding him turn stones into bread, as if it were time now to carve for himself, being so long neglected of his Father, as to fast forty days, and no supplies heard of; no sooner had Christ quench'd this Dart with that, *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, Mat. 4. 4, 5. but he hath another on the string which he let fly at him, tempting him to presumption, v. 6. *Then the Devil taketh and sets him on a Pinnacle*, and bids, *Cast thy self down headlong, for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee*, &c. As if he had said, If thou hast such confidence in God and his Word, as thou pretendest, shew it by casting thy self down, for thou hast a Word between thee and the ground, if thou darest trust God: and truly, though Christ had his Answer ready, and was prepared to receive his Charge on the right hand and on the left, being so compleatly arm'd that no temptation could come amiss; yet note we, Satans temptations on Christ, were like the Serpents motion on a Rock (of which Solomon speaks) that makes no impression, no dint at all, Prov. 30. 19. But on us they are as a Serpent on Sand or Dust, that leaves a print, when not in the heart, yet in the fancy, colours that which is next door to it, and so the Object there is ready to slip in, if great care be not observed. especially when he doth thus change his hand, as when we have resisted one way, fall on afresh another, yea,

plant his succeeding temptation upon our very resistance in the former. Now it requires some readiness in our postures, and skill at all our Weapons to make our defence, like a Disputant, when he is put out of his Road, and hath a new Question started, or Argument unusual brought, now he is tried to purpose. And truly this is Satans way when he tempts the Christian to neglect of duties of Gods Worship (from his worldly occasions, the multitude of them, or necessity of following them) and this takes not, then he is on the other side, and is drawing the Christian to the neglect of his worldly Calling, out of a seeming Zeal to promote his other in the Worship of God. Or first, he comes and labours to dead the heart in duty; but the Christian too watchful for him there, then he is puffing of him up with an opinion of his enlargement in it, and ever he keeps his sliest and most sublimated temptations for the last.

Fifthly, In his politick retreats. You shall have an enemy flee as overcome, when it is on a design of overcoming; this was *Jeshnah's* Wile, by which he catcht the men of *As* in a trap, *Josh. 3. 1*. We read not only of Satans being cast out, but of the *unclean Spirits going out* (voluntarily) yet with a purpose to come again, and bring worse company with him, *Mat. 12. 43*. Satan is not always beat back by the dint and power of conquering Grace, but sometimes he draws off, and raiseth his own siege, the more handsomly to get the Christian out of his Fastnesses and Trenches, that so he may snap him on the Plains, whom he cannot come at in his Works and Fortifications. Temptations send the Saint to his Castle, as the sight of the Dog doth the Coney to her Burrough: Now the soul walks the Rounds, stands upon its Guard, dares not neglect Duty, because the enemy is under its very Walls, shooting in his temptations continually; but when Satan seems to give the soul over, and the Christian finds he is not haunted with such motions as formerly, truly now he is prone to remit in his diligence, fail in his duty, and grow either infrequent or formal therein; as the *Romans*, whose Valour decayed for want of the *Carthaginian* Troops to alarm them; let Satan tempt, or not tempt, assault or retreat, keep thou in order, stand in a fighting posture, let his sight strengthen thy Faith, but not weaken thy Care. The *Parthians* do their enemies most hurt in their flight, shooting their Darts as they run, and so may Satan do thee, if thy seeming Victory makes thee secure.

CHAP. III.

Of Satans subtilty in chusing Instruments fit for his turn to carry on his tempting design.

3. **T**He third Particular in which Satan shews his subtilty, as a Tempter, is in the choice of those Instruments whom he useth for the carrying on this his Design, he as the Master-workman cuts out the temptation, and gives it the shape, but sometimes he hath his Journey-men to make it up; he knows his work may be carried on better by others, when he appears not above-board himself. Indeed there is not such a suitableness between the Angelical Nature and mans, as there is between one man and another; and therefore he cannot make his approaches so familiarly to us, as man can do to man: and here (as in other things) he is Gods Ape. You know this very reason was given why the Israelites desired God might not speak to them, but *Moses*; and God liked the motion; *They have well said, saith God, I will raise up a Prophet from the midst of them like unto thee*, Deut. 18. 17. Thus Satan, he useth the Ministry of men like our selves; by which as he becomes more familiar, so he is less suspected, while *Joab* like, he gets another to do his Errand. Now 'tis not any will serve his turn for this employment, he is very choice in his Instruments he pitcheth on: 'Tis not every Souldier is fit for an Ambassage to treat with an Enemy, to betray a Town, and the like. Satan considers who can do his work to his greatest advantage; and in this he is unlike God, who is not at all choice in his Instruments, because he needs none, and is able to do as well with one as another; but Satans power being finite, he must patch up the defect of the Lions skin with the Foxes. Now the persons Satan aims at for his Instruments, are chiefly of four sorts.

First, Persons of place and power. Secondly, Persons of parts and policy. Thirdly, Persons of holiness, or at least reputed so. Fourthly, Persons of relation and interest.

First, Satan makes choice of persons of place and power. These are either in the Common-wealth or Church; if he can he will secure the Throne and the Pulpit, as the two Forts that command the whole Line. First, Men of power in the Common-wealth; 'tis his old trick to be tampering with such. A Prince, a Ruler may stand for a thousand; therefore saith *Paul* to *Elymas*, when he would have turned the Deputy from the Faith: *O full of all subtilty, thou Child of the Devil!* Acts 13. 8. As if he had said, you have learnt this of your Father the Devil, to haunt the Courts of Princes, wind into the favour of great ones. There is a double policy Satan hath, in gaining such to his side. First, none have such advantage to draw others to their way, corrupt the Captain, and it is hard if he bring not off his Troop with him. When the Princes, men of renown in their Tribes, stood with *Corah*, Numb. 16. 2, 10. presently a multitude are drawn into the Conspiracy. Let *Jeroboam* set up Idolatry, and *Israel* is soon in a snare; it is said the people willingly walked after his Commandment, Hof. 5. 11.

Secondly, Should the sin stay at Court, and the infection go no further, yet the sin of such a one (though a good man) may cost a whole Kingdom dear; 1 Chron. 21. 1. *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people.* He owed *Israel* spite, and he pays them home in their Kings sin, which dropt in a fearful plague upon their heads. Secondly, Such as are in place and office in the Church. No such way to infect the whole Town, as to poison the Cistern at which they draw their water. Who shall persuade *Ahab* that he may go to *Ramoth Gilead* and fall? Satan can tell: *I will be a lying Spirit in the mouth of his Prophets*, 2 Kin. 22. 21. How shall the prophane be hardened in their sins? Let the Preacher sow pillows under their Elbows, and cry peace, peace, and it's done. How may the worship of God come to be neglected? Let *Hophni* and *Phineas* be but scandalous in their lives, and many both good and bad will *abhor the Sacrifice of the Lord*.

Secondly, He employeth persons of parts and policy, if any hath more pregnancy of wit, and depth of reason than other, he is the man Satan looks upon for his service; and so far he prevails, that very few of this Rank are found amongst Christs Disciples, *Not many wise*. Indeed God will not have his Kingdom, either in the heart, or in the world, maintained by carnal policy; 'tis a Gospel-command that we walk in godly simplicity, *fine plicis*; though the Serpent can shrink up into his folds, and appear what he is not, yet it doth not become the Saints to juggle or shuffle with God or men; and truly when any of them have made use of the Serpents subtilty, it hath not followed their hand; *Jacob* got the blessing by a wile, but he might have had it cheaper with plain dealing. *Abraham* and *Sarah* both dissemble to *Abimelech*, God discovers their sin, and reproves them for it by the mouth of an Heathen. *Asa* out of State-policy joins League with *Syria*, yea pawns the Vessels of the Sanctuary, and all for help, and what comes of all this, *Herein thou hast done foolishly*, saith God, *from henceforth thou shalt have wars*. Sinful policy shall not long thrive in the Saints hands; well, but Satan will not out of his way, he enquires for the subtillest-pated men, a *Balaam*, *Ahiophel*, *Haman*, *Sanballat*, men admired for their counsel and deep plots, these are for his turn. A wicked Cause needs a smooth Orator, bad Ware a pleasing Chapman, as in particular, his Instruments he useth to seduce and corrupt the minds of men, are commonly subtil-pated fellows, such, *that if it were possible, should deceive the very elect*. This made the Apostle so jealous of the *Corinthians*, whom he had espoused to Christ, lest as *Eve* by the Serpent, so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He must be a cunning Devil indeed, that can draw off the Spouses Love from her Beloved, yet there is such a Witchery in Satans Instruments, that many have been brought to fly on the face of those truths and

and Ordinances, yea, Christ himself to whom they have seemed espoused formerly. Now in three particulars this sort of Satans instruments shew their Masters subtilty.

First, In aspersing the good name of the sincere Messengers of Christ, Satans old trick to raise his credit up on the ruined reputation of Christs faithful servants. Thus he taught *Corah, Dathan and Abiram*, to charge *Moses and Aaron*, *Te take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy*, Numb. 16. 3. 16. They would make the people believe, that it was the pride of their heart, to claim a monopoly to themselves, as if none but *Aaron* and his fraternity were holy enough to offer Incense, and by this subtil practice they seduced (for a while) in a manner, the whole Congregation to their side. So the lying Prophets (that were Satans Knights of the Post to *Ahab*) fell foul on good *Micaiah*. Our Saviour himself was no better handled by the Pharisees and their Confederates, and *Paul* the chief of the Apostles, his Ministry undermined, and his reputation blasted by false teachers, as if he had been some weak sorry Preacher, 2 Cor. 10. 10. *His bodily presence is weak*, say they, *and his speech contemptible*; and is this your admired man?

Secondly, In covering their Impostures and Errors with choice Notions and excellent Truths. *Arrius* himself, and other dangerous Instruments of Satan were too wise to stuffe their discourses with nothing but heterodox matter; precious Truths dropt from them, with which they sprinkled their corrupt Principles, yet with such Art as should not easily be discerned. This (as one observes) our Saviour warns his Disciples of, when he bids them *beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees* (that is, of their Errors.) But why Leaven? For the secret mixture of it with the wholesome bread; you do not make your bread all of Leaven, none would then eat it, but crumble a little into a whole Batch, which soures all. Thus Christ doth tell the Disciples, that the Pharisees among many Truths mixt their Errors, and therefore it behoves them to beware, lest with the Truth the Error goes down also. Again, Leaven is very like the Dough, of the same Grain with it, only differs in age and sourness; thus Christ intimates the resemblance of their Errors to the Truth, scraped as it were out of the Scriptures, but soured with their false Glosses. This indeed makes it easie for Christs sheep to be infected with the scab of Error, because that Weed which breeds the Rot is so like the Grace that nourisheth them.

Thirdly, Their subtilty appears in holding forth such Principles as are indulgent to the flesh. This brings in whole shoals of silly souls into their net, the heart of man loves a life to shape a Religion according to his own humour, and is easie to believe that to be a truth which favour its own inclination. Now there are three Lusts that Satans Instruments labour to gratifie in their Doctrine, Carnal Reason, Pride, and fleshly Liberty.

First, Carnal Reason; this is the great Idol which the more intelligent part of the world worship, making it the very standard of their Faith, and from this bitter root have sprung those Arrian

and Socinian Heresies. And truly he that will go no further than Reason will carry him, may hold out in the plain way of the Moral Law, but when he comes to the depths of the Gospel, must either go back, or be content that Faith should help Reason over.

Secondly, Another Lust that Satan cockers, Pride. Man naturally would be a God to himself, [though for clambering so high he got his fall] and whatever Doctrine nourisheth a good opinion of man in his own eye, this is acceptable to him, and this hath spawned another fry of dangerous Errors. The Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian, which set Nature upon its own Legs, and perswade man he can go alone to Christ, or at least with a little external help, of an hand to lead, or Argument to excite, without any creating work in the Soul. O we cannot conceive how glib such stuffe goes down. If one Workman should tell you that your house is rotten, and must be pull'd down, and all new Materials prepared; and another should say, no such matter, such a Beam is good, and such a Spar may stand; a little cost will serve the turn: It were no wonder that you should listen to him that would put you to least cost and trouble: the faithful servants of Christ tell sinners from the Word, that man in his natural state is corrupt and rotten, that nothing of the old frame will serve, and there must needs be all new; but in comes the Arminian, and blows up the sinners pride, and tells him he is not so weak or wicked as the other represents him; if thou wilt thou maist repent and believe, or at least by exerting thy natural abilities, oblige God to super-add what thou hast not. This is the workman that will please wicked men best.

Thirdly, Satan by his Instruments nourisheth that desire of fleshly liberty, which is in man by nature, who is a son of *Belial*, without yoke; and if he must wear any, that will please best, which hath the softest lining, and pincheth the flesh least; and therefore when the sincere Teachers of the Word will not abate of the strictness of the Command, but press sincere obedience to it, then come Satans Instruments, and say, These are hard Task-Masters, who will not allow one Play-day in a year to the Christian, but tie him to continual duty, we'll shew you an easier way to Heaven: Come, saith the Papist, confes but once a year to the Priest (pay him well for his pains) and be an obedient Son of the Church, and we'll dispense with all the rest. Come, saith the Familist, the Gospel-Charter allows more liberty than these Legal Preachers tell you of, they bid you repent and believe, when Christ hath done all these to your hand; What have you left to do but to nourish the flesh? something sure is in it, that Impostors find such quick return for their Ware, while Truth hangs upon the Log; and is it not this? that they are content to afford Heaven cheaper to their Disciples, than Christ will to his. He that sells cheapest shall have most Customers, though at last best will be best cheap: Truth with self-denial, a better pennyworth, than Error with all its flesh-pleasing.

Thirdly, Satan makes choice of such as have a great name for holiness; none to a *live Bird* to draw

other Birds into the net; but is it possible that such should do this work for the Devil? Yes, such is the policy of Satan, and the frailty of the best, that the most holy men have been his Instruments to seduce others. *Abraham* he tempts his Wife to lie, *Say thou art my Sister*. The old Prophet leads the man of God out of his way, *1 Kings 13*. The holiness of the man, and the reverence of his age, 'tis like gave authority to his counsel. O how should this make you watchful, whose long travel and great progress in the ways of God have gained you a name of eminency in the Church, what you say, do, or hold, because you are File-leading men, and others look more on you, than their way!

Fourthly, Satan chuseth such, as by relation or affection have deep interest in the persons he would gain. Some will kill the Child for the Nurses sake, and like the Present for the hand that brings it. 'Tis

like, *David* would not have received that from *Nabal*, which he took from *Abigail*, and thanks her. Satan sent the Apple by *Eves* hand to *Adam*. *Delilah* doth more with *Samson*, than all the *Philistines* bands. *Jobs* Wife brings him the poison, *Curse God and die*. Some think Satan spared her life, when he slew his Children and Servants (though she was also within his Commission) as the most likely Instrument, by reason of her relation and his affection, to lead him into temptation. Satan employs *Peter* the disciple to tempt *Christ*; at another time his Friends and Kinsfolk. Some Martyrs have confest, the hardest work that they met withal, was to overcome the prayers and tears of their Friends and Relations; *Paul* himself could not get off this snare without heart-breaking; *What mean you to weep, and to break my heart?* *Acts 21. 13.*

CHAP. IV.

wherein this Point of Satans subtilty, as a Tempter to sin, is briefly applied.

Use 1. **F**irst, Affect not sinful policy and subtilty, it makes you but like the Devil. There is the wisdom of the Serpent, which is commended, and that is his perfection as a Creature, in which both the Literal and the Mystical excel, the one in an ingenious observing nature, above the Beasts of the Field; and the other in Knowledge, as an Angel above men; but as the subtilty of the one, and knowledge of the other is degenerate, and makes them more able to do mischief, the one to the bodies, the other to the souls of men, this kind of wisdom and subtilty is to be abhorred by us: *The Serpents eye* (as one saith) *does well only in the Doves head*.

First, Affect not subtilty in contriving any sin. Some are *wise to do evil*, *Jer. 4. 22*. Masters of this craft, who can as they lie on their beds, cast their wicked designs into an artificial method, shewing a kind of Devilish Wit therein, as the *Egyptians* who dealt wisely (as they thought) with the *Israelites*, and *Jezabel*, who had printed her bloody design in so fair a Letter, that some might read her Saint, while she was playing the Devil. This is the black Art indeed, and will make the soul black as hell that practiseth it. It is not hard for any (though a fool) to learn. Be but wicked and the Devil will help thee to be witty: Come but a while to his School, and thou maist soon be a *cunning man*. No sins speak a higher attainment in wickedness, than those which are the result of deliberate counsel and deep plottings. Creatures, as they go longer with their young, so their Birth is more strong and perfect; as the Elephant above all others. The longer a sin is a forming and forging within, and the oftener the head and heart meet about it, the completer the sin. Here are many Litters of unformed sin in one, such I mean, that are conceived and cast forth in the hurry of an extemporary passion, such sudden Acts shew weakness, these other, deep wickedness.

Secondly, Take heed of hiding sin when thou hast committed it. This is one of the Devices that are in mens heart, and as much Art and Cunning is shewn in this, as in any one part of the sinners trade. What a trick had the Patriarchs to blind their Fathers eye with a bloody Coat? *Josephs* Mistress to prevent a charge from *Joseph*, acculeth him for what she is guilty, like the Robber who scap'd by crying *Stop the Thief*. God taught man to make Coats to cover his naked body, but the Devil learnt him to weave these Coverings to hide the nakedness of his soul; the more subtil thou seemest in concealing thy sin, the more egregiously thou playest the Fool. None so sham'd as the Liar when found out, and that thou art sure to be. Thy covering is too short to hide thee from Gods eye, and what God sees (if thou dost not put thy self to shame) he will tell all the world of hereafter, however thou escapest in this life.

Thirdly, Take heed of subtilty and sinful policy, in compassing that which is lawful in it self: 'tis lawful to improve thy Estate, and husband it well for thy posterity; but take not the Devils counsel, who will be putting thee upon some tricks in thy Trade, and flights in thy Dealing; such may go for wise men a while; but the Prophet reads their Destiny, *Jer. 16. 11. At his end he shall be a fool*. 'Tis lawful to love our Estate, Life, Liberty, but beware of sinful policy to save them. 'Tis no wisdom to shuffle with God, by denying his truth, or shifting off our duty to keep correspondente with men; he is a weak Fencer that lays his soul at open Guard to be stabbed and wounded with guilt, while he is lifting up his hands to save a broken head. Our fear commonly meets us at that door by which we think to run from it. *He that will save his life shall lose it*. As you love your peace, Christians, be plain hearted with God and man, and keep the Kings high way; go the plain way of the Command

mand to obtain thy desire, and not leap over hedge and ditch to come a little sooner to the journey's end; such commonly either meet with some stop, that makes them come back with shame, or else put to venture their necks in some desperate leap. He is sure to come safer (if not sooner) home, that is willing to go a little about to keep God company. The Historians Observation is worth the Christians remembrance: *Consilia callida prima Specie lata, tractatu dura, eventu tristia*, Livius. Crafty Counsels promise fair at first, but prove more difficult in the managing, and in the end do pay the undertaker home with desperate sorrow.

Use 2. Is Satan so subtil? O then think not to be too cunning for the Devil, he'll be too hard for thee at last; sin not with thoughts of an after-repentance; it is possible thou meanest this at present: but dost thou think who sits down to play with this cheater, to draw out thy stock when thou pleasest? Alas, poor wretch, he has a thousand devices to carry thee on, and engage thee deeper, till he hath not left thee any tenderness in thy Conscience. As some have been served at play, intending only to venture a shilling or two, yet have by the secret witchery in Gaming, played the very Cloaths off their back before they had done: O how many have thus sinned away all their Principles; yea, Profession it self, that they have not so much as this Cloak left, but walk naked to their shame? Like Children who got into a Boat, think to play near the shore, but are unawares by a violent Gust carried down to the wide Sea. O how know you that dally with Satan, but that at last you may (who begin modestly) be carried down to the broad sea of prophaneness? Some men are so subtil to overreach, and so cruel when they get men into their hand, that a man had better beg his bread than borrow of them. Such a Merchant is Satan, cunning to insinuate, and get the Creature into his Books, and when he hath him on the hip, no more mercy to be had at his hand, than the Lamb may expect from the ravenous Wolf.

Use 3. Study his Wiles, and acquaint thy self with Satans policy. Paul takes it for granted, that every Saint doth in some measure understand them; *We are not ignorant of his devices*, 2 Cor. 2. 11. He is but an illfencer that knows and observes nothing of his Enemies play; many particular stratagems I have laid down already, which may help a little; and for thy direction in this study of, and enquiry into Satans wiles, take this threefold counsel.

First, Take God into thy Counsel. Heaven overlooks Hell. God at any time can tell thee, what plots are hatching there against thee. Consider Satan as he is Gods Creature, so God cannot but know him. He that makes the Watch, knows every Pin in it. He formed this crooked Serpent, though not the crookedness of this Serpent; and though Satans way in tempting be as wonderful as the way of a Serpent on a Rock, yet God traceth him; yea

knows, all his thoughts together. *Hell it self is naked before him*, and this Destroyer hath no covering. Again, consider him as Gods Prisoner, who hath him fast in Chains; and so the Lord, who is his Keeper, must needs know whither his Prisoner goes, who cannot stir without his leave. Lastly, Consider him as his Messenger; for so he is. *An evil Spirit from the Lord vexed Saul*; and he that gives him his Errand, is able to tell thee what it is. Go then and plow with Gods Heifer; improve thy interest in Christ, who knows what the Father knows, and is ready to reveal all that concerns thee, to thee, *John 15. 15*. It was he who described the Devil coming against Peter and the rest of his Apostles, and faithfully revealed it to them, *Luk. 22*. before they thought of any such matter. Through Christs hands pass all that is transacted in Heaven and Hell. We live in days of great actions, deep counsels, and plots on all sides, and only a few that stand on the upper end of the world know these Mysteries of State, all the rest know little more than Pamphlet-Intelligence: thus it is in regard of those plots which Satan in his infernal Conclave is laying against the souls of men, they are but a few that know any thing to purpose of Satans design against them; and those are the Saints from whom God cannot hide his own counsels of Love, but sends his Spirit to reveal unto them here, what he hath prepared for them in Heaven, *1 Cor. 2. 10*. and therefore much less will he conceal any destructive plot of Satan from them.

2. Be intimately acquainted with thy own heart, and thou wilt the better know his design against thee, who takes his method of tempting, from the inclination and posture of thy heart. As a General walks about the City, and views it well, and then raiseth his Batteries, where he hath the greatest advantage: So doth Satan compass, and consider the Christian in every part before he tempts.

3. Lastly, Be careful to read the Word of God with observation. In it thou hast the History of the most remarkable Battels that have been fought by the most eminent Worthies in Christs Army of Saints, with the great Warriour Satan: Here thou maist see how Satan hath foiled them, and how they have recovered their lost ground. Here you have his Cabinet-counsels opened. There is not a Lust which you are in danger of, but you have it descried, not a temptation which the Word doth not arm you against. It is reported that a certain Jew should have poisoned Luther, but was happily prevented by his Picture which was sent to Luther, with a warning from a faithful Friend, take heed of such a man when he saw him, by which he knew the Murderer, and escaped his hands. The word shews thee, O Christian, the face of those Lusts, which Satan employs to butcher thy precious soul; *By them is thy Servant warned*, saith David, *Psal. 19. 11*.

CHAP. V.

wherein is shewed the subtilty of Satan, as a Troubler and an Accuser for sin; where many of his wiles and Policies to disquiet the Saints Spirits are discovered.

THe second General in which Satan appears such a subtil enemy, is, in molesting the Saints peace, and disquieting the Saints Spirit. As the holy Spirits work is not only to be a Sanctifier, but also a Comforter, whose fruits are *righteousness and peace*; so the evil Spirit Satan is both a seducer unto sin, and an accuser for sin, a Tempter and a Troubler, and indeed in the same order. As the Holy Ghost is first a Sanctifier, and then a Comforter; so Satan first a Tempter, then a Troubler. *Josephs* Mistress first tries to draw him to gratifie her Lust; that string-breaking, she hath another to trounce him and charge him; and for a plea, she hath his Coat to cover her malice: nor is it hard for Satan to pick some hole in the Saints Coat, when he walks most circumspectly. The proper Seat of sin is the Will, of Comfort the Conscience; Satan hath not absolute knowledge of, or power over these (being lock'd up from any other but God) and therefore what he doth, either in defiling temptations, or disquieting, is by wiles more than by open force, and he is not inferiour in troubling to himself in tempting. Satan hath, as the Serpent, a way by himself; other Beasts, their motion is direct, right on, but the Serpent goes askew (as we say) winding and wreathing its body, that when you see a Serpent creeping along, you can hardly discern which way it tends, thus Satan in his vexing temptations hath many intricate policies, turning this way and that way, the better to conceal his designs from the Saint, which will appear in these following Methods.

SECT. I.

First, He vexeth the Christian by laying his Brats at the Saints door, and charging him with that which is his own Creature; and here he hath such a notable Art, that many dear Saints of God are woefully hampered and dejected, as if they were the vilest Blasphemers, the veriest Atheists in the world; whereas indeed the Cup is of his own putting into the Sack, but so sily conveyed into the Saints bosom, that the Christian though amazed and frightened at the sight of them, yet being jealous of his own heart, and unacquainted with Satans tricks of this kind, cannot conceive how such motions should come there (if not bred in, and vomited out by his own naughty heart) and so bears the blame of the sin himself, because he cannot find the right Father, mourning as one that is forlorn and cast off by God, or else (saith he) I should never have such Vermine of Hell creeping in my bosom; and here Satan hath his end he propoeth; for he is not so silly as to hope he should have welcome with such a horrid Crew of Blasphemous and Atheistical thoughts in that soul, where he hath been denied when he came

in an enticing way; no, but his design is by way of revenge, because the soul will not prostitute itself to his Lust other ways, therefore to haunt it and scare it with those Imps of Blasphemy. As he served *Luther*, to whom he appeared, and when repulsed by him, went away, and left a noisom stench behind him in the Room. Thus when the Christian had worsted Satan in his more pleasing Temptations, being maddened, he belcheth forth this stench of blasphemous motions to annoy and affright him, that from them the Christian may draw some sad Conclusion or other; and indeed the Christians sin lies commonly more in the Conclusion, which he draws from them (as that he is not a Child of God) than in the motions themselves. All the counsel therefore I shall give thee in this case, is to do with these motions, as you use to serve those Vagrants and Rogues that come about the Countrey; whom, though you cannot keep from passing through the Town, yet you look they settle not there, but whip them and send them to their own home. Thus give these motions the Law, in mourning for them, resisting of them, and they shall not be your Charge, (yea, 'tis like you shall seldomer be troubled with such Guests) but if once you come to entertain them, and be Satans Nurse to them, then the Law of God will cast them upon you.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Another Wile of Satan as a troubler, is in aggravating the Saints sins (against which he hath a notable declamatory faculty) not that he hates the sin, but the Saint; now in this, his chief subtilty is so to lay his Charge, that it may seem to be the act of the holy Spirit; he knows an Arrow out of Gods Quiver wounds deep; and therefore when he accuseth he comes in Gods Name; as suppose a Child were conscious to himself of displeasing his Father, and one that owes him a spite (to trouble him) should counterfeit a Letter from his Father, and cunningly conveys it into the Sons hand, who receives it as from his Father, wherein he chargeth him with many heavy crimes, disowns him, and threatens he shall never come in his sight, or have penny portion from him; the poor son (conscious to himself of many undutiful carriages, and not knowing the plot) takes on heavily, and can neither eat nor sleep for grief, here is a real trouble begot from a false and imaginary ground: Thus Satan observes how the squares go between God and his Children, such a Saint he sees tardy in his duty, faulty in that service, and he knows the Christian is conscious of this, and that the Spirit of God will also shew his distaste for these, both which prompt Satan to draw a Charge at length, raking up all the bloody aggravations he can think of,

of, and gives it in to the Saint as sent from God. Thus he taught *Job's* Friends to pick up those infirmities, which dropt from him in his distress, and shoot them back in his face, as if indeed they had been sent from God to declare him an Hypocrite, and denounce his wrath for the same.

Quest. But how should we know the false accusations of Satan from the rebukes of God and his Spirit?

Answ. First, if they cross any former act or work of the Spirit in thy soul, they are Satans, and not the holy Spirits. Now you shall observe, Satans scope in accusing the Christian, and aggravating his sin, is to unlaint him, and perswade him he is but an Hypocrite. O, saith Satan, now thou hast shewn what thou art, see what a spot is on thy coat, this is not the spot of a Child; who ever that was a Saint, committed such a sin after such a sort? All thy Comforts and Confidence which thou hast bragged of, were false, I warrant you; thus you see Satan at one blow dasheth all in pieces. The whole Fabrick of Grace which God hath been rearing up many years in the soul, must now at one puffe of his malicious mouth be blown down, and all the sweet Comforts with which the Holy Ghost hath sealed up Gods Love, must be defaced with this one blot, which Satan draws over the fair Copy of the Saints Evidence. Well, Soul, for thy comfort know, if ever the Spirit of God hath begun a sanctifying or comforting work, causing thee to hope in his mercy, he never is, will, or can be the Messenger to bring contrary News to thy Soul, his Language is not yea and nay, but *Tea* and *Amen* for ever. Indeed when the Saint plays the Wanton, he can chide, yea, will frown, and tell the soul roundly of its sin, as he did *David* by *Nathan*, *Thou art the man*, this thou hast done, and paints out his sin with such bloody colours, as made *David's* heart melt, as it were into so many drops of water; but that shall not serve his turn, he tells him what a Rod is sleeping for him (that shall smart to purpose) one of his own house, no other than his Darling Son shall rise up against him, that he may the more fully conceive how ill God took the sin of him, a Child, a Saint, when he shall know what it is to have his beloved Child traitorously invade his Crown, and unnaturally hunt for his precious Life; yet not a word all this while is heard from *Nathan* teaching *David* to unlaint himself, and call in question the work of God in his soul. No, he had no such Commission from God, he was sent to make him mourn for his sin, not from his sin to question his state which God had so oft put out of doubt.

Secondly, When they asperse the riches of Gods Grace, and so charge the Christian, that withal they reflect upon the good Name of God, then they are not of the Holy Spirit, but from Satan. When you find your sins so represented and aggravated to you, as exceeding either the mercy of Gods Nature, or the Grace of his Covenant, *Hic se aperit Diabolus*, this comes from that foul Lyar. The Holy Spirit is Christs Spokesman to commend him to Souls, and to woo sinners to embrace the Grace of the Gospel, and can such words drop from the sacred Lips, as should break the match, and sink Christs esteem in the thoughts of the Creature? you

may know where this was minted. When you hear one commend another for a wife or good man, and at last come in with a But which dasheth all, you will easily think he is no friend to the man, but some sly enemy that by seeming to commend, desires to disgrace the more: Thus when you find God represented to you as merciful and gracious, but not to such a great sinner as you, to have power and strength, but not able to save thee, you may say, Avant Satan, thy speech bewrayeth thee.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Another Wile of Satan lies in cavilling at the Christians duties and performances, by which he puts him to much toil and trouble. He is at Church as soon as thou canst be, Christian, for thy heart; yea, he stands under thy Closet-window, and heareth what thou sayest to God in secret, all the while studying how he may commence a Suit against thee for thy duty; like those that come to Sermons to carp and catch at what the Preacher saith, that they may make him an Offender for some word or other mis-placed; or like a cunning Opponent in the Schools, while his Adversary is busie in reading his Position, he is studying to confute it; and truly Satan hath such an Art at this, that he is able to take our duties in pieces, and so disfigure them that they shall appear formal, though never so zealous, hypocritical, though enrich'd with much sincerity. When thou hast done thy duty, Christian, then stands up this Sophister to ravel out thy work; there (will he say) thou playedst the hypocrite, zealous, but serving thy self, here wandring, there nodding; a little further puffed up with pride, and what wages canst thou hope for at Gods hands, now thou hast spoiled his work, and cut it all out into Chips? Thus he makes many poor souls lead a weary life; nothing they do but he hath a fling at, that they know not whether best pray or not, hear or not; and when they have prayed and heard, whether it be to any purpose or not: Thus their souls hang in doubt, and their days pass in sorrow, while their enemy stands in a corner, and laughs at the Cheat he hath put upon them; as one, who by putting a counterfeit Spider into the Dish, makes those that sit at Table either out of conceit with the meat, that they dare not eat, or afraid of themselves if they have eaten, lest they should be poisoned with their meat.

Quest. But you will say, *What will you have us to do in this case to withstand the Cavils of Satan in reference to our duties?*

Answ. 1. First, Let this make thee more accurate in all thou doest; 'tis the very end God aims at in suffering Satan thus to watch you, that you his Children might be the more circumspect, because you have one over-looks you, that will be sure to tell tales of you to God, and accuse thee to thy own self. Doth it not behove thee to write thy Copy fair, when such a Critick reads and scans it over? Doth it not concern thee to know thy heart well, to turn over the Scriptures diligently, that thou mayest know the state of thy soul-controversie in all the Cases of Conscience thereof, when thou hast such

such a subtil Opponent to reply upon thee.

Secondly, Let it make thee more humble. If Satan can charge thee with so much in thy best Duties, O what then can thy God do? God suffers sometimes the infirmities of his people to be known by the wicked (who are ready to check and frump them for them) for this end, to humble his people; how much more low should these accusations of Satan, which are in a great part too true, lay us before God?

Thirdly, Observe the fallacy of Satans Argument, which discovered, will help thee to answer his cavil: the fallacy is double.

First, He will persuade thee that thy duty and thy self are hypocritical, proud, formal, &c. because something of these sins are to be found in thy duty: Now, Christian, learn to distinguish between pride in a duty, and a proud duty, hypocrisy in a person, and an hypocrite; Wine in a man, and a man in Wine. The best of Saints have the stirrings of such Corruptions in them and in their Services; these Birds will light on an Abrahams Sacrifice, but comfort thy self with this, that if thou findest a party within thy bosom pleading for God, and entering its protest against these, thou and thy services are Evangelically perfect. God beholds these as the weaknesses of thy sickly state here below, and pities thee, as thou wouldst do thy lame Child: How odious is he to us that mocks one for natural defects, a blear eye, or a stammering tongue? Such are these in thy new nature. Observable is that in Christs Prayer against Satan, *Zech. 3. 3. The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* As if Christ had said, Lord, wilt thou suffer this envious Spirit to twit thy poor Child with, and charge him for those infirmities that cleave to his imperfect state? he is but new plucked out of the fire, no wonder there are some sparks unquench'd, some Corruption unmortified, some disorders unreformed in his Place and Calling. And what Christ did for *Josuah*, he doth unceasingly for all his Saints, apologizing for their infirmities with his Father.

Secondly, His other fallacy is in arguing from the sin that is in our duties, to the non-acceptance of them. Will God, saith he, thinkest thou, take such broken Groats at thy hand? Is he not a holy God? Now here (Christian) learn to distinguish and answer Satan. There is a double acceptance. There is an acceptance of a thing by way of payment of a debt, and there is acceptance of a thing offered as a token of Love, and testimony of Gratitude. He that will not accept of broken money, or half the sum for payment of a Debt, the same man, if his Friend sends him, though but a bent six-pence, in token of his Love, will take it kindly. 'Tis true, (Christian) the Debt thou owest to God, must be paid in good and lawful money, but (for thy comfort) here Christ is thy Pay-master; send Satan to him, bid him bring his Charge against Christ, who is ready at Gods right hand to clear his accounts, and shew his Discharge for the whole debt; but now thy performances and obedience come under another notion (as tokens of thy Love and Thankfulness to God) and such is the gracious disposition

of thy heavenly Father, that he accepts thy Mite: Love refuseth nothing that Love sends. 'Tis not the weight or worth of the Gift, but the desire of a man is his kindness, *Prov. 19. 22.*

SECT. IV.

4. A Fourth Wile of Satan as a Troubler, is, to draw the Saint into the depths of despair, under a specious pretence of not being humbled enough for sin. This we find singled out by the Apostle for one of the Devils Fetches. *We are not ignorant (saith he) of his Devices,* 2 Cor. 2. 11. *νοήματα*, his Sophistical Reasonings. Satan sets much by this sleight; no weapon oftner in his hand; Where is the Christian that hath not met him at this door? Here Satan finds the Christian easie to be wrought on, the humours being stirr'd to his hand, while the Christian of his own accord complains of the hardness of his heart, and is very prone to believe any, who comply with his musing thoughts; yea, thinks every one flatters him, that would persuade him otherwise. 'Tis easier to dy that soul into black, which is of a sad colour already, than to make such a one take the lightsome tincture of joy and comfort.

Quest. But how shall I answer this subtil enemy, when he thus perplexeth my spirit, with not being humbled enough for sin, &c.

Ans. I answer as to the former; labour to spy the fallacy of his Argument, and his mouth is soon stopt.

First, Satan argues thus: There ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow; but there is no proportion between thy sins and thy sorrow: therefore thou art not humbled enough. What a plausible Argument is here at first blush? For the Major, that there ought to be a proportion between sin and sorrow, this Satan will shew you Scripture for. *Mansseh* was a great sinner, and an ordinary sorrow will not serve his turn; *He humbled himself greatly before the Lord,* 1 Chron. 3. 12. Now (saith Satan) weigh thy sin in the balance with thy sorrow; art thou as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner? So many years thou hast waged war against the Almighty, making havock of his Laws, loading his patience till it groaned again, raking in the sides of Christ with thy bloody Dagger (while thou didst grieve his Spirit, and reject his Grace) and dost think a little remorse (like a rolling Cloud letting fall a few drops of sorrow) will now be accepted? No, thou must steep in sorrow, as thou hast soak'd in sin. Now to shew you the fallacy, we must distinguish of a twofold proportion of sorrow.

First, An exact proportion of sorrow to the inherent nature and demerit of sin.

Secondly, There is a proportion to the Law and Rule of the Gospel. Now the first is not a thing feasible, because the injury done in the least sin is infinite, because done to an infinite God; and if it could be feasible, yet according to the tenor of the first Covenant it would not be acceptable; because it had no clause to give any hope for an after-game by repentance; but the other which is a Gospel-sorrow, this is indeed *repentance unto life*, *Acts 5. 31. Zech. 12. 10.* (both given by the Spirit of the Gospel,

spel, and to be tried by the Rule of the Gospel.) This is given for thy relief. As you see sometimes in the high-way (where the waters are too deep for travellers) you have a foot-bridge or Causey, by which they may escape the flood, and safely pass on; so that none but such as have not eyes, or are drunk, will venture to go through the waters, when they may avoid the danger. Thou art a dead man, if thou think to answer thy sin with proportionable sorrow, thou wilt soon be above thy depth, and quackle thy self with thy own tears, but never get over the least sin thou committedst; go not on therefore as thou lovest thy self, but turn aside to this Gospel-path, and thou escapest the danger. O you tempted souls, when Satan saith you are not humbled enough, see where you may be relieved; *I am a Roman* (saith Paul) *I appeal to Caesar*. I am a Christian (say) I appeal to Christs Law; and what is the Law of the Gospel concerning this? Heart-sorrow is Gospel-sorrow; *They were pricked in their heart*, Act 2. 37. and *Peter* (like an honest Chirurgeon) will not keep these bleeding Patients longer in pain with their wounds open; but presently claps on the healing plaister of the Gospel; *Believe in the Lord Jesus*. Now a prick to the heart is more than a wound to the Conscience. The heart is the seat of life. Sin wounded there lies a dying. To do any thing from the heart makes it acceptable, Eph. 6. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 11. Now poor soul, hadst thou sate thus long in the Devils stocks, if thou hadst understood this aright? doth thy heart clear of condemn thee, when in secret, thou art bemoaning thy sin before God? If thy heart be false, I cannot help you, no not the Gospel it self, but if sincere, thou hast boldness with God, 1 John 2. 31.

A second Argument Satan useth, is this: He whose sorrow falls short of theirs, that never truly repented, he is not humbled enough: But, soul, thy sorrow falls short of some, that never truly repented; *Ergo*. Well, the first Proposition is true, but how will Satan prove his *Minor*? Thus, *Abah* he took on for his sin, and went in sack-cloth. *Judas* he made bitter complaint. O (saith Satan) didst thou not know such a one that lay under terror of Conscience, walking in a sad mournful condition so many months, and every one took him for the greatest Convert in the Country? and yet he at last fell foully, and proved an Apostate; but thou never didst feel such smart, pass so many weary nights and days in mourning and bitter lamentation as he hath done, therefore thou fallest short of one that fell short of repentance. And truly this is a sad stumbling block to a soul in an hour of temptation. Like a ship sunk in the mouth of the Harbour, which is more dangerous to others than if it had perisht in the open sea. There is less scandal by the sins of the wicked, who sink (as it were) in the broad sea of Prophaneness, than in those who are convinced of sin, troubled in Conscience, and miscarry so near the Harbour, within sight, as it were, of saving Grace. Tempted souls can hardly get over these without dashing. Am I better than such a one that proved naught at last? Now to help thee a little to find out the fallacy of this Argument, we must distinguish between the terrors that accompany sor-

row, and the intrinsecal nature of this Grace. The first which are accessary may be separated from the other as the raging of the sea, which is caused by the wind from that sea, when the wind is down. From this Distinction take two Conclusions.

First, One may fall short of an Hypocrite in the terrors that sometimes accompany sorrow, and yet have the truth of this Grace, which the other with all his terrours wants. Christians run into many mistakes, by judging rather according to that which is accessary, than that which is essential to the nature of duties and graces. Sometimes thou hearest one pray with a moving expression (while thou canst hardly get out a few broken words in duty) and thou art ready to accuse thy self and to admire him; as if the gilt of the Key made it open the door the better; thou seest another abound with joy which thou wantest, and art ready to conclude his grace more, and thine less, whereas thou mayest have more real Grace, only thou wantest a light to shew thee where it lies. Take heed of judging by accessaries; perhaps thou hast not heard so much of the ratling of the chains of Hell, nor in thy Conscience the out-cries of the damned, to make thy flesh tremble; but hast thou not seen that in a bleeding Christ which hath made thy heart melt and mourn, yea loath and hate thy Lusts more than the Devil himself? Truly (Christian) 'tis strange, to hear a Patient complain of the Physician (when he finds his Physick work effectually, to the evacuating of his distempered humors, and the restoring his health) meerly because he was not so sick as some others with the working of it; soul thou hast more reason to be blessing God that the convictions of the Spirit wrought so kindly on thee, to effect that in thee, without those terrours, which have cost others so dear.

Secondly, This is so weak an Argument, that contrariwise the more the terrours are, the less the sorrow is for sin while they remain. These are indeed preparatory sometimes to sorrow; they go before this Grace, as austere *John* before meek *Jesus*. But as *John* went down when Christ went up, his increase was *John's* decrease; so as truly godly sorrow goes up, there terrours go down. As the wind gathers the Clouds, but those Clouds seldom melt into a fet Rain, until the wind falls that gathered them: so these terrours raise the Clouds of our sins in our Consciences, but when these sins melt into godly sorrow, this lays the storm presently; indeed, as the loud winds do blow away the Rain, so these terrours do keep off the soul from this Gospel-sorrow. While the Creature is making an out-cry, 'tis damn'd, 'tis damn'd, it is taken up so much with the fear of Hell, that sin as sin (which is the proper object of godly sorrow) is little look'd on or mourned for. A Murderer condemned to die, is so possess'd with the fear of death, and thought of the Gallows, that there lies the slain body (it may be) before him, unlamented by him: but when his Pardon is brought, then he can bestow his tears freely on his murdered Friend, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*. Faith is the Eye, this Eye (beholding its sin piercing Christ, and Christ pardoning its sin) affects the heart, the heart

heart affecting sighs; these inward Clouds melt and run from the Eye of Faith in tears; and all this is done when there is no tempest of terrour upon the Spirit, but a sweet serenity of Love and Peace: and

therefore, Christian, see how Satan abuseth thee, when he would perswade thee thou art not humbled enough, because thy sorrow is not attended with these legal terrours.

CHAP. VI.

A brief Application of the second Branch of the Point, viz. Of Satans subtilty as a Troubler and Accuser for sin.

Use 1. **I**S Satan so subtil to trouble the Saints peace? This proves them to be Children of Satan, who shew the same Art and subtilty in vexing the spirits of the Saints, as doth their infernal Father: not to speak of bloody Persecutors, who are the Devils slaughter slaves to butcher the Saints; but of those who more slyly trouble and molest the Saints peace.

First, Such as rake up the Saints old sins, which God had forgiven and forgotten (meerly to grieve their spirits and bespatter their names) these shew their devilish malice indeed, who can take such pains to travel many years back, that they may find a handful of dirt to throw on the Saints face. Thus *Shimei* twitted *David*, *Come out thou bloody man*, 1 Sam. 1. 6, 7. When you that fear God meet with such reproaches, answer them as *Bezai* did the Papists, who for want of other matter charged him for some wanton Poems penn'd by him in his youth, *Hi homunciones irruident mihi gratiam Dei*. These men (said he) grudge me the pardoning mercy of God.

Secondly, Such as watch for the Saints halting, and catch at every infirmity to make them odious and themselves merry. 'Tis a dreadful curse such bring upon themselves (though they little think of it) no less than *Amalek's*, the remembrance of whose name, God threatned to blot from under Heaven; why what had *Amalek* done to deserve this? they smote the hindermost, those that were feeble, Deut. 25. 19. and could not march with the rest. And was it so great a cruelty to do this? much more to smite with the edge of a mocking tongue the feeble in Grace.

Thirdly, Such who father their sins upon the Saints; thus *Ahab* calls the Prophet *the Troubler of Israel*, when it was himself and his Fathers House. What a grief was it, think you, to *Moses* his Spirit, for the *Israelites* to lay the blood of those that died in the wilderness at his door? whereas (God knows) he was their constant Bail, when at any time Gods hand was up to destroy them; and this is the charge which the best of Gods servants in this crooked Generation of ours lie under, We may thank them (say the prophane) for all our late miseries in the Nation: we were well enough till they would reform us. O for shame, blame not the good Physick that was administred, but the corrupt body of the Nation that could not bear it.

Fourthly, Such as will themselves sin, meerly to trouble the Saints spirit; thus *Rabshakeh* blasphemed, and when desired to speak in another language, he

goes on the more to grieve them. Sometimes you shall have a prophane wretch (knowing one to be conscientious, and cannot brook to hear the Name of God taken in vain, or the ways of God flouted) will on purpose fall upon such Discourse as shall grate his chaste ears, and trouble his gracious spirit; such a one strikes Father and Child at one blow, thinks it not enough to dishonour God, except the Saint stands by to see and hear the wrong done to his Heavenly Father.

Use 2. Secondly, This may afford matter of admiration and thankfulness to any of you (O ye Saints) who are not at this day under Satans hatches. Is he so subtil to disquiet, and hast thou any peace in thy Conscience? To whom art thou beholden for that serenity that is on thy spirit? to none but thy God, under whose Wing thou fittest so warm and safe. Is there not combustible matter enough in thy Conscience for his sparks to kindle? Perhaps thou hast not committed such bloody sins as others; that's not the reason of thy peace; for the least is big enough to damn, much more to trouble thee. Thou hast not grossly fallen (may be) since Conversion, that's rare (if thou beest of long standing) yet the Ghosts of thy unregenerate sins might walk in thy Conscience: thou hast had many testimonies of Gods Favour, hast thou not? who more than *David*? Psal. 77. yet he at a loss sometimes, learning to spell his evidences, as if he could never have read them. The sense of Gods Love comes and goes with the present taste. He that is in the dark (while there) sees not the more for former light. O blest God for that light which shines in at thy window; Satan is plotting to undermine thy Comfort every day. This Thief sees thy pleasant fruits as they hang, and his teeth water at them, but the wall is too high for him to climb; thy God keeps this Serpent out of thy Paradise. 'Tis not the Grace of God in thee, but the Favour of God, as a shield about thee, defends thee from the wicked one.

Use 3. Thirdly, Let Satans subtilty to molest your peace, make thee, (O Christian) more wise and wary, thou hast not a fool to deal with, but one that hath wit enough to spill thy comfort, and spoil thy joy, if not narrowly watcht: this is the dainty bit he gapes for; 'tis not harder to keep the flies out of your Cup-boards in Summer from tainting your provision, than Satan out of your Consciences; many a sweet meal hath he robbed the Saints of, and sent them supperless to bed; take heed therefore that he roams not thine away also.

CHAP. VII.

Containing some Directions, tending to entrench and fortifie the Christian against the assaults and wiles of the Devil, as a Troubler of the Souls Peace.

Quest. **H**ow shall I stand in a defensive posture (may a Christian say) against these wiles of Satan as a Troubler?

SECT. I.

Ans. 1. First, if thou wouldst be guarded from him as a troubler, take heed of him as a seducer. The haft of Satans hatchet (with which he lies chopping at the root of the Christians comfort) is commonly made of the Christians wood; First, he tempts to sin, and then for it. Satan is but a Creature, and cannot work without tools, he can indeed make much of a little, but not any thing of nothing, (as we see in his assaulting of Christ, where he troubled himself to little purpose, because he came and found nothing of him, *Joh. 14. 30.*) (Though the Devil throws the stone, yet 'tis the mud in us that royles our comforts. 'Twas in vain for the Philistins to fall on *Samson* till his lock was cut: take heed therefore of yielding to his enticing motions; these are the stumbling-blocks, at which he hopes thou wilt break thy shins, and bruise thy conscience, which once done, let him alone to spin out the cure. Indeed a Saints flesh heals not so easily as others: drink not of the Devils wassel, there is poyson in the cup, his wine is a mocker, look not on it as it sparkles in the temptation, what thou drinkest down with sweetness, thou wilt be sure to bring up again as gall and wormwood. Above all sins, take heed of presumptuous ones, thou art not out of the danger of such, *Psal. 19. 13.* Sad stories we have of Saints falls, and what follows? then, Take him, Jailor, (saith God) Deliver such a one unto Satan; and if a Saint be the Prisoner, and the Devil the Keeper, you may grieve how he shall be used. O how he will tear and rend thy conscience! Though that dreadful Ordinance is not used (as it should be) in the Church, yet Gods Court sits, and if he excommunicates a soul from his presence, he falls presently into Satans hatches. Well, if through his subtilty thou hast been overtaken, take heed thou stayest not in the Devils quarters, shake the Viper off thy hand, ply thee to thy Chirurgion: green wounds cure best, but if thou neglectest, and the wind get to it, thy conscience will soon fester. *Ahab* (we read *1 Kings 22. 35*) was wounded in battel, and was loth to yield to it, (it is said) he was held up in his chariot, but he dyed for it: when a soul hath received a wound, committed a sin, Satan labours to boulder him up with flattering hopes, holds him up, as it were, in the chariot against God; what, yield for this? afraid for a little scratch, and lose the spoil of thy future pleasure for this? O take heed of listning to such counsel, the sooner thou yieldest, the fairer quarter thou shalt have. Every step in this way sets thee further from thy peace. A rent garment is catch'd by every nail, and the rent made wider. Renew

therefore thy repentance speedily, whereby this breach may be made up, and worse prevented, which else will befall thee.

SECT. II.

Secondly, study that grand Gospel-truth of a souls Justification before God, acquaint thy self with this in all its causes; the moving cause, the free mercy of God, being justified freely by his grace; *Rom. 3. 24.* the meritorious, which is the blood of Christ; and the instrumental, faith, with all the sweet privileges that flow from it. An effectual door once open'd to let the soul into this truth, would not only spoil the Popes market (as *Gardner* said) but the Devils also; when Satan comes to disquiet the Christians peace (for want of a right understanding here) he is soon worsted by his enemy: as the silly hare which might escape the dogs in some covert or burrough that is at hand, but (trusting to her heels) is by the print of her own feet and scent, which she leaves behind, followed, till at last (weary and spent) she falls into the mouth of them. In all that a Christian doth, there is a print of sinful infirmity, and a scent by which Satan is enabled to trace and pursue him over hedge and ditch, this grace and that duty, till the soul, not able to stand before the accusation of Satan, is ready to fall down in despair at his feet: whereas here's a hiding place, whither the enemy durst not come, the clefts of the rock, the hole of the stairs, which this truth leads unto. When Satan chargeth thee for a sinner, perhaps thou interposest thy repentance and reformation, but soon art beaten out of those works, (when thou art shewen the sinful mixtures that are in them) whereas this truth would choak all his bullets, that thou believest on him who had said, *Not unto him that worketh, but to him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness, Rom. 4. 5.* Get therefore into this tower of the Gospel Covenant, and rowle this truth (as she that stone on the head of *Abimelech*) on the head of Satan.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, be sure (Christian) thou keepest thy Plains. Take heed that Satan coop thee not up in some straits, where thou canst neither well fight, nor flee. Such a Trap the Egyptians hoped they had the Israelites in, when they cryed, *They are entangled, they are entangled.* There are three kinds of straits wherein he labours to entrap the Christians; nice Questions, obscure Scriptures, and dark Providences.

First, he labours to puzzle him with nice and scrupulous questions, (on purpose to retard the work, and clog him in his motion) that meeting with such

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intricates

intricates in his Christian course, which he cannot easily resolve, thereby he may be made, either to give over, or go on heavily: therefore we have particular charge not to trouble the weak heads of young Converts with *doubtful disputations*, Rom. 14. 1. Sometimes Satan will be asking the soul, how it knows its Election: and where he finds one not so fully resolved, as to dare to own the same, he frames his Argument against such a ones closing with Christ and the Promise; as if it were presumption to assume that (which is the only portion of the Elect) before we know our selves of that number. Now Christian, keep the Plains, and thou art safe. 'Tis plain, we are not to make Election a ground for our Faith, but our Faith and Calling a *medium* or argument to prove our Election. Election indeed is first in order of divine acting. God chuseth before we believe; yet faith is first in our acting. We must believe before we can know we be elected, yea, by believing we know it. The Husbandman knows 'tis Spring by the sprouting of the grafs, though he hath no Astrology to know the Position of the Heavens: thou maist know thou art Elect, as surely by a work of Grace in thee, as if thou hadst stood by Gods Elbow when he writ thy name in the Book of Life. It had been presumption for *David* to have thought he should have been King, till *Samuel* anointed him; but then none at all: when thou believest first, and closest with Christ, then is the Spirit of God sent to anoint thee to the Kingdom of Heaven: this is that holy oyl which is poured upon none but heirs of Glory; and 'tis no presumption to read what Gods gracious purpose was towards thee of old, when he prints those his thoughts, and makes them legible in thy effectual calling: here thou dost not go up to Heaven, and pry into Gods Secrets, but Heaven comes down to thee, and reveals them. Again, he will ask the Christian what was the time of his Conversion; art thou a Christian (will he say) and dost thou not know when thou commencedst? Now keep the Plains, and content thy self with this, that thou seest the streams of Grace, though the time of thy Conversion be like the head of *Nilus*, not to be found. God oft comes betimes, before gross sins have deflowred the soul, and steals into the Creatures bosom without much noise. In such a case Satan doth but abuse thee when he sends thee on this errand; you may know the Sun is up, though you did not observe when it rose. Again, what will become of thee (saith Satan) if God should bring thee into such an affliction or trial, when thou maist burn or turn, or when all thy outward estate shall be rent from thee, no meal in the Barrel, or money in the Purse; darst thou have so good an opinion of thy self, as to think that thy Faith will hold out in such an hour of temptation? If thou hast but half an eye, Christian, thou maist see what Satan drives at: this is an ensnaring question; by the fear of future troubles he labours to bring thee into a neglect of thy present duty, and indispole thee also for such a state whenever it falls. If a man hath much business to do on the morrow, 'tis his wisdom to discharge his mind thereof (when composing to sleep) lest the thoughts thereof (break his rest, and make him the more unfit in the morn-

ing. The less rest the soul hath in God and his Promise concerning future events, the less strength it will find to bear them when the pinch comes. When therefore thou art molested with such fears, pacifie thy heart with these three plain Conclusions.

First, Every event is the product of Gods Providence, not a Sparrow, much less a Saint falls to the ground by poverty; sickness, persecution, &c. but the hand of God is in it.

Secondly, God hath put in a Caution, *he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. He that enables thee in one condition, will in another. God learns his servants their whole Trade. Grace is an universal principle. At the first moment of thy spiritual life, suffering Grace was infused as well as praying Grace.

Thirdly, God is wise to conceal the succours he intends in the several changes of thy life, that so he may draw thy heart into an entire dependance on his faithful promise. Thus to try the metal of *Abrahams* faith he let him go on, till his hand was stretcht forth, and then he comes to his rescue. Christ sends his Disciples to sea, but stays behind himself, on a design to try their Faith, and shew his Love. Comfort thy self therefore with this, though thou seest not thy God in the way, yet thou shalt find him in the end.

Secondly, Satan perplexes the tender consciences of doubting Christians with obscure Scriptures, whose sense lies too deep for their weak and distempered judgements readily to find out, and with these he hampers poor souls exceedingly: indeed as melancholy men delight in melancholy walks, so doubting souls most frequent such places of Scripture in their musing thoughts, as encrease their doubts; how many have I known that have lookt so long on those difficult places, Heb. 6. 6, 7. Heb. 10. 26. (which pass the understanding as a swift stream the eye, so that the sense is not perceived without great observation,) till their heads have turned round, and they at last (not able to untie the difficulties) have fallen down into despairing thoughts and words of their own condition, crying out, O they have sinned against knowledge of the Truth, and therefore no mercy remains for them, who if they would have refreshed their understandings by looking off these places (whose engraving is too curious to be long pored on by a weak eye,) they might have found that in other Scriptures plainly exprest, which would have enabled them, as through a Glass, more safely to have viewed these: Therefore, Christian, keep the Plains; thou maist be sure 'tis thine enemy that gives thee such stones to break thy teeth, when thy condition calls rather for bread and wine, such Scriptures, I mean, as are most apt to nourish thy Faith, and cheer thy drooping spirit. When thou meetest such plain Scriptures which speak to thy case, go over where it is fordable, and do not venture beyond thy depth. Art thou afraid because thou hast sinned since the knowledge of the truth, and therefore no sacrifice remains for thee? See *David* and *Peters* case, how it patterns thine, and left upon record, that their recovery may be a Key in thine hand to open such places as these; maist thou not safely conclude from these, this is

not their meaning, that none can be saved that sin after knowledge? Indeed in both these places, it is neither meant of the falls of such as ever had true grace, nor of a falling away in some particular acts of sin, but of a total universal falling away from the Faith, (the doctrine of it as well as seeming practice of it.) Now if the root of the matter were ever in thee, other Scriptures will first comfort thee against those particular apostasies into which thou hast relapsed, by sweet promises inviting such to return, and Precedents of Saints, who have had peace spoken to them after such folly, and also they will satisfy thee against the other, by giving full security to thy faith, that thy little grace shall not dye, being immortal, though not in its proper essence, because but a creature, yet by Covenant, as it is a child of Promise.

Thirdly, dark Providences. From these Satan disputes against Gods love to, and grace in a soul. First, Ie got a commission to plunder *Job* of his temporal estate, and bereave him of his children, and then labours to make him question his spiritual estate and tonship: his wife would have him entertain hard thoughts of God, (saying, *Curse God and dye*), and his friends as hard thoughts of himself, (as if he were an hypocrite) and both upon the same mistake, as if such an afflicted condition, and a gracious state were inconsistent. Now (Christian) keep the Plains, and neither from this charge God foolishly for thine enemy, nor thy self as his; Read the saddest Providence with the Comment of the Word, and thou canst not make such a harsh interpretation. As God can make a straight line with a crooked stick, be righteous when he useth wicked Instruments; so also gracious when he dispenseth harsh Providences. *Joseph* kept his love, when he spake roughly to his brethren. I do not wonder that the wicked think they have Gods blessings, because they are in the warm Sun: Alas, they are strangers to Gods counsels, void of his Spirit, and sensual, judging of God and his providence by the report their present feeling makes of them; like little Children, who think every one loveth them that gives them plums. But 'tis strange, that a Saint should be at a loss for his afflicted state, when he hath a Key to decipher Gods character: Christian, hath not God secretly instructed thee by his Spirit from the word, how to read the short-hand of his providence? dost not thou know that the Saints afflictions stand for blessings? *Every son whom he loves he corrects*; and prosperity in a wicked state, must it not be read a curse? doth not God damn such to be rich, honourable, victorious in this world, as well as to be tormented in another world? God gives them more of these than they seem to desire sometimes, and all to bind them faster up in a deep sleep of security, as *Jael* served *Sisera*, *Judg. 5. 25.* he shall have milk, though he asked but water, that she might nail him the surer to the ground. Milk having a property (as some write) to encline to sleep.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, be careful to keep thy old receipts which thou hast had from God for the pardon of thy sins.

There are some gaudy dayes, and Jubilee-like Festivals, when God comes forth clothed with the robes of his mercy, and holds forth the Scepter of his grace more familiarly to his children than ordinary, bearing witness to their faith, sincerity, &c. and then the firmament is clear, not a cloud to be seen to darken the Christians comfort. Love and joy are the souls repast and pastime, while this feast lasts. Now when God withdraws, and this cheer is taken off, Satans work is how he may deface and wear off the remembrance of this testimony, which the soul so triumphs in for its spiritual standing, that he may not have it as an evidence when he shall bring about the suit again, and put the soul to produce his writings for his spiritual state, or renounce his claim. It behoves thee therefore to lay them up safely: such a testimony may serve to non-suit thy accuser many years hence: one affirmative from Gods mouth for thy pardoned state, carries more weight (though of old date) than a thousand negatives from Satans. *Dauids Songs of old* spring in with a light to his soul in his midnight-sorrows.

Quest. But what counsel would you give me (saith the distressed soul) who cannot fasten on my former comforts, nor dare to avouch those evidences, which once I thought true? I find indeed there have been some treaties of old between God and my soul; some hopes I have had; but these are now so defaced and interlined with black-slidings, repentances and falls again, that now I question all my evidences, whether true or counterfeit: what should one in this case do?

Ans. First, renew thy repentance, as if thou hadst never repented. Put forth fresh acts of faith, as if thou hadst never believed. This seriously done, will stop Satans mouth with an unexpected answer. Let him object against thy former actings as hypocritical, what can he say against thy present repenting and believing, which if true, sets thee beyond his shot. It will be harder for Satan to disprove the present workings of Gods gracious Spirit, whilst the impressions thereof are fresh; than to pick an hole in thy old deeds and evidences. Acts are transient, and as wicked men look at sins committed many years since, as little or none, by reason of that breadth of time which interposeth; so the Christian upon the same account stands at great disadvantage, to take the true aspect of those acts of grace, which so long ago passed between God and him, though sometimes even these are of great use. As God can make a sinner possess the sins of his youth, as if they were newly acted, to his terror in his old age, so God can present the comforts and evidences which of old the Saint received, with those very thoughts he had then of them, as if they were fresh and new.

And therefore secondly; If yet he haunts thee with fears of thy spiritual estate, ply thee to the throne of grace, and beg a new copy of thy old evidence, which thou hast lost. The Original is in the Pardon-Office in Heaven, whereof Christ is Master; if thou beest a Saints, thy name is upon record in that Court; make thy moan to God, hear what news from Heaven, rather than listen to the tales which are brought by thine enemy from Hell.

Did such reason less with Satan, and pray over their fears more to God, they might sooner be resolved. Can you expect truth from a liar and comfort from an enemy? Did he ever prophesie well of believers? Was not *Job* the Devils hypocrite, whom God vouch't for a non-such in holiness, and prov'd him so at last? If he knew thou wert a Saint, would he tell thee so? If an Hypocrite, he would be as loth thou shouldst know it; turn thy back therefore on him, and go to thy God: fear not, but sooner or later he will give his hand again to thy Certificate. But look thou dost not rashly pass a censure on thy self, because a satisfactory answer is not presently sent at thy desire; the Messenger may stay long, and bring good news at last.

Thirdly, Shun battel with thine enemy while thou art in a fitter posture; and that thou mayest draw into thy trenches, and make an honourable retreat into those fastnesses and strengths, which Christ hath provided for his sick and wounded souldiers. Now there are two places of advantage into which deserted souls may retire; the Name of God, and the absolute Promises of the Gospel; these I may call the fair Havens, which are then chiefly of use, when the storm is so great, that the ship cannot live at sea. O, faith Satan, dost thou hope to see God? none but the pure in heart shall be blest with that vision. Thinkst thou to have comfort? that is the portion of the Mourners in spirit. Now, soul, though thou canst not say (in the hurry of temptation) thou art the pure and the Mourner in spirit, yet then say thou believest God is able to work these in thee, yea, hath promised such

a mercy to poor sinners, 'tis his Covenant, (*He will give a new heart, a clean heart, a soft heart,*) and here I wait, knowing, as there was nothing in the creature to move the great God to make such Promises; so there can be nothing in the creature to hinder the Almighty his performance of them, where and when he pleaseth. This act of faith accompanied with a longing desire after that grace thou canst not yet find, and an attendance on the means, though it will not fully satisfy all thy doubts (may be) yet will keep thy head above water, that thou despairest not; and such a shore thou needst in this case, or the house falls.

Fourthly, If yet Satan dogs thee, call in help, and keep not the Devils counsel. The very strength of some temptations lies in the concealing of them, and the very revealing of them to some faithful friend, (like the opening and pricking of an impostume) gives the soul present ease: Satan knows this too well; and therefore as some thieves, when they come to rob an house, either gag them in it, or hold a pistol to their breast, frightening them with death, if they cry or speak: Thus Satan, that he may more freely rifle the soul of its peace and comfort, over-awes it so, that it dares not disclose his temptation. O faith Satan, if thy brethren or friends know such a thing by thee, they'll cast thee off, others will hoot at thee. Thus many a poor soul hath been kept long in its pangs by biting them in; thou lovest (Christian) a double help by keeping the Devils secret, the counsel and prayers of thy fellow-brethren; and what an invaluable loss is this?

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Saints victory over their subtil enemy, and whence it is that Creatures so overmatcht, should be able to stand against Satans wiles.

THe second Branch of the Apostles Argument follows, to excite them the more vigorously to their arms, and that is from the possibility, yea, certainty of standing against this subtil enemy, if thus arm'd, *That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* So that this gives the Apostles Argument its due temperament; for he meant not to scare them into a cowardly flight, or sullen despair of victory, when he tells them their enemy is so subtil and politick: but to excite them to a vigorous resistance, from the assured hope of strength to stand in battel, and victoriously after it; which two I conceive are comprehended in that phrase, standing against the wiles of Satan. Sometimes *to stand*, implies a fighting posture; so *verse 14.* Sometimes a conquering posture, *Job 19. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.* That earth which was the field, where all the bloody battels were fought between him and Satan, on it shall he stand, when not an enemy shall dare to shew his head. So that taking both these in: the observation is,

Dott. Satan with all his wiles and wiles shall ne-

ver vanquish a soul arm'd with true grace; nay, he that hath this armour of God on, shall vanquish him. Look into the World, you shall not find a Saint, but hath been in the list with him, sifted and winnowed more or less by this enemy, yet at last we find them all coming off with an honourable victory: as in *David, Job, Peter, Paul*, who were the hardest put to it of any upon record; and lest some should attribute their victory to the strength of their inherent grace, above other of their weaker brethren, you have the glory of victories appropriated to God, in whom the weak are as strong as the strongest, *2 Cor. 12. 9. Jam. 5. 21.* We shall give a double Reason of this truth, why the Christian who seems to be so over-matcht, is yet so unconquerable.

Reas. 1. First the curse that lies upon Satan and his cause. Gods curse blasts wherever it comes. The *Canaanites* with their neighbour-Nations were bread for *Israel*, though people famous for war; and why? They were cursed Nations. The *Egyptians* a politick people; *Let us deal wisely* (say they) yet being cursed of God, this lay like a thorn at their heart,

heart, and was at last their ruine; yea, let the Israelites themselves, (who carry the badge of Gods Covenant on their flesh) by their sins once become the people of Gods curse, and they are trampled like dirt under the Assyrians foot. This made *Bala* beg so hard for a curse upon *Israel*. Now there is an irrevocable curse cleaves to Satan from *Isa.* 10. 5. *Gen.* 3. 14, 15. And the Lord said to the Serpent, *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed, &c.* which place, though partly meant of the literal serpent, yet chiefly of the Devil and the wicked, (his spiritual serpentine brood) as appears by the enmity pronounced against the Serpents seed and the Womans, which clearly holds forth the feud between Christ with his seed, against the Devil and his. Now there are two things in that curse which may comfort the Saints. First, the curse prostrates Satan under their feet: *Upon thy belly shalt thou go*, which is no more than is elsewhere promised; that God will subdue Satan under our feet. Now this prostrate condition of Satan assures believers, that the Devil shall never lift his head (that is, his wily policy) higher than the Saints heel. He may make thee limp, but not bereave thee of thy life, and this bruise which he gives thee shall be rewarded with the breaking of his own head, that is, the utter ruine of him and his cause. Secondly, his food is here limited and appointed. Satan shall not devour whom he will. The dust is his food, which seems to restrain his power to the wicked, who are of the earth earthy, meer dust; but for those who are of a heavenly extraction, their graces are reserved for Christs food, *Cam.* 7. 13. and their souls surely are not a morsel for the Devils tooth.

The second reason is taken from the wisdom of God, who as he undertakes the ordering of the Christians way to Heaven, *Psal.* 37. 24. so especially this business of Satans temptations. We find Christ was not led of the evil spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, but of the Holy Spirit, *Mat.* 4. 1. Satan tempts not when he will, but when God pleaseth: and the same Holy Spirit which led Christ into the field, brought him off with victory. And therefore we find him marching in the Power of the Spirit (after he had repulsed Satan) into Galilee, *Luke* 4. 14. When Satan tempts a Saint, he is but Gods messenger, *2 Cor.* 12. 7. *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me*, So our Translation. But rather as *Bezai*, who will have it in casu recto, the Messenger Satan, implying that he was sent of God to Paul. And indeed the errand he came about was too good and gracious to be his own, *Left I should be exalted above measure*; The Devil never meant to do Paul such a good office; but God sends him to Paul, as David sent Uriah with letters to Joab, neither knew the contents of their message. The Devil and his instru-

ments both are Gods instruments, therefore the wicked are called his Sword, his Ax, *Psal.* 17. 13. *Isa.* 10. 15. now let God alone to wield the one and handle the other. He is but a bungler that hurts and hackles his own legs with his own axe, which God should do, if his Children should be the worse for Satans temptations. Let the Devil chuse his way, God is for him at every weapon. If he'll try it by force of arms, and assault the Saints by persecution, as the Lord of Hosts, he will oppose him. If by policy and subtilty, he is ready there also. The Devil and his whole counsel are but fools to God. Nay, their wisdom, foolishness. Cunning and Art commend every thing but sin. The more artificial the watch, the picture, &c. the better; but the more Wit and Art in sin, the worse, because it is employed against the All-wise God, that cannot be out-witted, and therefore will in the end but pay the workmen in greater damnation. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, yea, than the wisdom of men and Devils, that is, the means and instruments which God opposeth Satan withal. What weaker than a Sermon? who sillier than the Saints in the account of the wise world? yet God is wiser in a weak Sermon, than Satan in his deep plots (where in the State-heads of a whole Conclave of profound Cardinals are knock'd together) wiser in his simple ones, than Satan in his *Achtophels* and *Sanballats*; and truly God chuseth on purpose to defeat the policies of hell and earth by these, that he may put such to greater shame, *1 Cor.* 1. 21. How is the great Scholar ashamed to be baffled by a plain Countrymans argument? thus God calls forth Job to wrestle with Satan and his Seconds, (for such his three friends shewed themselves in taking the Devils part) and sure he is not able to hold up the cudgels against the Fencing-master, who is beaten by one of his Scholars. God sits laughing, while hell and earth sit plotting, *Psal.* 2. 4. He disappoints the devices of the crafty, he breaketh their studied thoughts and plots, as the words import, *Job* 5. 12. in one moment pulling down the labours of many years policy. Indeed, as great men keep wild beasts for game and sport, (as the Fox, the Boar, &c.) so doth God Satan and his Instruments, to manifest his wisdom in the taking of them. It is observed, that the very hunting of some beasts affords not only pleasure to the Hunter, but also more sweetness to the eater. Indeed God, by displaying of his wisdom in the pursuit of his Saints enemies, doth superadd a sweet relish to their deliverances at last. He brake the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat to his people. After he had hunted Pharaoh out of all his forms and burrows, now he breaks the very brains of all his plots, and serves him up to his people with the garnishment of his wisdom and power about.

CHAP. IX.

An account is given, how the All-wise God doth out-wit the Devil in his tempting of Saints to sin; wherein are laid down the ends Satan propounds, and how he is prevented in all, with the gracious issue that God puts to these his temptations.

Quest. **B**ut how doth God defeat Satan, and out-wit his wiles in tempting his Saints?

Ans. This God doth by accomplishing his own gracious ends for the good and comfort of his people, out of those temptations from which Satan designs their ruine; this is the noblest kind of Conquest, to beat back the Devils weapon to the wounding of his own head, yea, to cut it off with the Devils own sword; thus God sets the Devil to catch the Devil, and lays, as it were, his own counsels under Satans wings, and makes him hatch them. Thus the Patriarchs help to fulfil Josephs dream, while they are thinking to rid their hands of him. To instance in a few particulars.

SECT. I.

First, Satan by his temptations aims at the defiling of the Christians conscience, and disfiguring that beautiful face of Gods image, which is engraven with holiness in the Christians bosome; he is an unclean spirit himself, and would have them such, that he might glory in their shame; but God out-wits him, for he turneth the temptations of Satan to sin, to the purging them from sin; they are the black sope with which God washeth his Saints white.

First, God useth the temptations of Satan to one sin, as a preventive against another; so Pauls thorn in the flesh to prevent his pride. God sends Satan to assault Paul on that side where he is strong, that in the mean time he may fortifie him where he is weak. Thus Satan is befool'd; as sometimes we see an Army sitting down before a Town, where it wastes its strength to no purpose; and in the mean time gives the enemy an advantage to recruit, and all this by the counsel of some Hushai, that is a secret friend to the contrary side. God, who is the Saints true friend, sits in the Devils Council, and overrules proceedings there to the Saints advantage; He suffers the Devil to annoy the Christian with temptations to Blasphemy, Atheism; and by these, together with the troubles of spirit they produce, the soul is driven to duty, is humbled in the sense of these horrid apparitions in its imagination, and secured from abundance of formality and pride, which otherwise God saw invading him. As in a Family, some business falls out, which keeps the Master up later than ordinary, and by this the thief, who that night intended to rob him, is disappointed; had not such a soul had his spirit of prayer and diligence kept awake by those afflicting temptations, 'tis likely Satan might have come as a seducer, and taken him napping in security.

Secondly, God purgeth out the very sin Satan tempts to, even by his tempting. Peter never had such a conquest over his self-confidence, never such

an establishment of his faith, as after his foul fall in the High-Priests Hall. He that was so well perswaded of himself before, as to say, Though all were offended with Christ, yet would not he, how modest and humble was he in a few days become, when he durst not say, he loved Christ more than his fellow-brethren, to whom before he had prefer'd himself? What an undaunted Confessor of Christ and his Gospel doth he prove before Councils and Rulers, who even now was dash'd out of countenance by a silly Maid? and all this the product of Satans temptation sanctified unto him. Indeed a Saint hath a discovery by his fall, what is the prevailing corruption in him; so that the temptation doth but stir the humour, which the soul having found out, hath the greater advantage to evacuate, by applying those means, and using those ingredients which do purge that malady, *cum delectu*. Now the soul will call all out against this destroyer; Paul had not took such pains to buffet his body, had he not found Satan knocking at that door.

Thirdly, God useth these temptations for the advancing of the whole work of grace in the heart. One spot occasions the whole garment to be washed. David overcome with one sin, renews his repentance for all, *Psal. 51*. A good husband, when he seeth it rain in at one place, sends for the workman to look over all the house. This indeed differenceth a sincere heart from an hypocrite, whose repentance is partial, soft in one plot, and hard in another. Judas crys out of his treason, but not a word of his thievery and hypocrisie. The hole was no wider in his conscience than where the bullet went in; whereas true sorrow for one breaks the heart into shivers for others also.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Satan by tempting one Saint hath a mischievous design against others, either by encouraging them to sin by the example of such a one, or discouraging them in their holy course by the scandal he hath given; but God here befools him.

First, Making the miscarriages of such a seasonable caveat to others to look to their standing. Dost thou see a meek Moses provok'd to anger? what watch and ward hast thou need keep over thy unruly heart? Though loud winds do some hurt by blowing down here a loose tyle, and there a turret, (which was falling before) yet the common good surmounts the private damage of some few; these being as a broom in Gods hand to sweep and cleanse the air: so though some (that are wicked) are by Gods righteous judgment for the same hardened into further abominations by the Saints falls, yet the good which sincere souls receive by having their

their formality and security in a further degree purged, doth abundantly countervail the other, who are but sent a little faster, whither they were going before.

Secondly, God makes his Saints falls an Argument for comfort to distressed consciences. This hath been, and is as a feather (when the passage seems so stoppt, that no comfort can be got down otherwise) to drop a little hope into the soul, to keep the creature alive from falling into utter despair; some have been revived with this, when next door to Hell in their own fears. *David's* sin was great, yet found mercy; *Peter* fell foully, yet now in Heaven. Why sittest thou here, O my soul, under the hatches of despair? Up, and call upon thy God for mercy, who hath pardoned the same to others.

Thirdly, God hath a design in suffering Satan to trounce some of his Saints by temptation, to train them up into a fitness to succour their fellow-brethren in the like condition; he sends them hither to School, (where they are under Satans ferula and lash) that his cruel hand over them may make them study the Word and their own hearts, by which they get experience of Satans policies, till at last they commence Masters in this Art of comforting tempted souls. It is an Art by itself, *to speak a word in season to the weary soul*: 'Tis not serving out an Apprenticeship to humane Arts will furnish a man for this; great Doctors have proved great Dunces here, knowing no more how to handle a wounded conscience, than a Rustick the Chirurgions Instrument in dissecting the body when an Anatomy-Lecture is to be read. 'Tis not the knowledge of the Scripture (though a man were as well acquainted with it as an Apothecary with his pots and glasses in his shop, able to go directly to any Promise on a sudden) will suffice. No, not grace it self, except exercised with these buffetings and soul-conflicts. Christ himself we find trained up in this School, *Isa. 50. 4. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.* Even as the Tutor call's up his Pupil to read to him; and what is the Lecture which is read to Christ, that he may have the tongue of the Learned to speak a word in season to the weary soul? see *vers. 5. The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned I away my back, I gave my back to the smiters, &c.* His sufferings (which were all along mingled with temptations) were the Lecture from which Christ came out so learned, to resolve and comfort distressed souls. So that the Devil had better have let Christ alone, yea, and his Saints also, who do him but the greater disservice in comforting others; none will handle poor souls so gently as those who remember the smart of their own heart-forsows; none so skilful in applying the comforts of the Word to wounded consciences, as those who have lain bleeding themselves; such know the symptoms of soul-trouble, and feel others pains in their own bosomes, which some that know the Scriptures (for lack of experience) do not, and therefore are like a novice Physician, who perhaps can tell you every plant in the Herbal, yet wanting the practick part, when a Patient comes, knows not well how to make use of his skill. The Saints expe-

riences help them to a sovereign Treacle made of the Scorpions own flesh, (which they through Christ have slain) and that hath a vertue above all other to expel the venom of Satans temptations from the heart.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Satan in tempting the Saint to sin, labours to make a breach between God and the soul. He hates both, and therefore labours to divide these dear friends. If I can (thinks he) get such a one to sin, God will be angry, and when angry, he'll whip his child soundly, this will be some sport; and when God is correcting the Saint, he'll be questioning the love of God to him, and cools in his love to God; so though I should not keep him from Heaven at last, yet he shall have little joy thither in the way. In this case God and the soul will be like man and wife fallen out, who neither of them look kindly one upon another. Now see how God befools Satan in both these.

First, God useth his Saints temptations as his method by which he advanceth the communications of his love unto them. The Devil thought he had got the goal, when he got *Adam* to eat the forbidden fruit, he thought now he had man in the same predicament with himself, as unlikely ever to see the face of God as those Apostrate spirits: But (alas!) this was by God intended to usher in that great Gospel-plot of saving man by Christ, who (as soon as this Prologue of mans fall is done) is brought upon the stage in that grand promise of the Gospel made to *Adam*, and at Gods command undertakes the charge of recovering lost man out of Satans Clutches, and re-instating him in his primitive glory, with an access of more than ever man had at first; so that the meanest Lily in Christs field exceeds *Adam* in all his native Royalty. And as Satan sped in his first temptation, so he is still on the losing hand: What got he by all his pains upon *Job*, but to let that holy man know at last how dearly God loved him? When he foiled *Peter* so shamefully, do we not find Christ owning *Peter* with as much love as ever? *Peter* must be the only Disciple, to whom by none the joyful news of his Resurrection is sent, *Go tell thy disciples and Peter*; as if Christ had said, Be sure let his sad heart be comforted with this news, that he may know I am friends with him for all his late cowardise.

Quest. But doth not this seem to countenance sin, and make Christians heedless, whether they fall into temptation or no? If God do thus shew his love to his Saints after their falls and foils, why should we be so shy of sin, which ends so well at last?

Ans. Two things will prevent the danger of such an inference.

First, We must distinguish between a souls being foiled through his own infirmity, and his Enemies subtilty and power over-matching him, and another, who through a false heart doth voluntarily prostrate himself to the lust of Satan; though a General will shew little pity to a souldier that should traiterously throw down his arms, and run to the enemy, yet if another in fighting receives a wound and be worsted, it will be no dishonour for him to express

express his pity and love, no, though he should send him out of the field in his own Coach, lay him in his own bed, and appoint him his own Chirurgeon. God doth not encourage wickedness in a Saint, but pities weakness. Even when the Saints fall into a sin in its nature presumptuous, they do not commit it so presumptuously as others; there is a part true to God in their bosoms though over-voted. *Moses* spake unadvisedly, but the Devil had his instruments to provoke him, quite against the good mans temper. *David* numbers the people, but see how the Devil dogg'd and hunted him, till at last he got the better, *1 Chron. 21. 1. Satan stood up and provoked David to number Israel.* How bravely did *Job* repel Satans darts? no wonder if in such a shower some one should get between the joynts of his armour. And for *Peter*, we know (good man) with what a loyal heart, yea, zealous, he went into the field, though when the enemy appear'd his heart failed him.

Secondly, Consider but the way how God communicates his love after Saints falls, not in sinning, or for sinning, but in mourning and humbling their souls for their sins. Indeed did God smile on them while acting sinfully, this might strengthen their sin, as wine in a fever would the disease; but when the fit is off, the venom of the disease spent, and breathed out in a kindly humiliation, now the creature lies low. Gods wine and comfort is a cordial to the drooping spirit, not fuel for sin. When *David* was led in temptation first, he must be clad in sack-cloth and mourning, and then God takes it off, and puts on the garment of joy and praise, *1 Chron. 21. 10, 15. Job*, though he expect so much courage and patience, yet (bewraying some infirmities after he was baited long by so many fresh dogs, men and Devils) he must cry *peccavi*, and abhor himself in dust and ashes, before God will take him into his arms, *Job 42. 6.* and the same way God takes with all his children. Now to his Saints in such a posture, God may with safety, to his honour and their good, give a larger draught of his love than ordinary, their fears and sorrow which their sin hath cost them, will serve instead of water to dash this strong wine of joy, and take away its headiness, that it neither fume up into pride, nor occasion them to reel backward into Apostasie.

Quest. But why doth God now communicate his love.

Ans. 1. First, from his own pitiful nature; *You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* God loves not to rake in bleeding wounds, he knows a mourning soul is subject to be discouraged. A frown or angry look from God, whom the Saint so dearly loves, must needs go near the heart, therefore God declares himself at hand to revive such, *Isa. 57. 15.* and he gives the reason, *vers. 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath, for the spirit should fail before me.* Whose spirit is there meant? not of the presumptuous sinner, he goes on and never blinks, but of the contrite and humble ones. As the father observes the disposition of his children, one commits a fault and goes on rebelliously, despising his fathers anger; ano-

ther (when offending him) lays it to heart, refuseth to eat, gets into some corner to lament the displeasure of his father; the father sees it, and his bowels yearn towards him. Indeed, should he not put his child out of fear by discovering his love, the spirit of such a one would fail; 'tis not possible there should be a long breach between such a father and such a son, the one relenting over his sin, the other over his mourning son.

Secondly, God doth thus, to pour the greater shame upon Satan, who is the great make-bate between God and the soul. How is the man ashamed that hath stirr'd up variance between husband and wife, father and son, to see the breach made up, and all set themselves against him? It went ill on Christs side, when *Herod* and *Pilate* were made friends, and can it go well with Satan to see all well between God and his children? If *Esther* be in favour, *Haman* her enemy shall have his face covered. Indeed, this covers Satans face with shame, to see a poor Saint even now his prisoner, whom he had leave to rob and plunder, tempt and disquiet, now sitting in the Sun-shine of Gods love, while he like a ravening Lion takes on for the loss of his prey.

Secondly, Satans aim is, to weaken the Saints faith on God, and cool his love to God, but befool'd in both; for first, God turns their temptations, yea, their falls, to the further establishment of their faith, which (like the tree) stands stronger for its shaking, or like the Gyant *Anteus*, who in his wrestling with *Hercules* is feign'd to get strength by every fall to the ground. False faith indeed once foil'd, seldom comes on again; but true faith riseth and fights more valiantly, as we see in *Peter* and other Scripture-examples. Temptation to faith is as fire to gold, *1 Pet. 1. 7.* The fire doth not only discover which is true gold, but makes the true gold more pure; it comes out may be less in bulk and weight, (because sever'd from that soil and dross which embas'd it) but more in value and worth. When Satan is bound up, and the Christian walks under the shines of divine favour, and encouragement of divine assistance; his faith may appear great, if compar'd with another under the withdrawals of God, and buffetings of Satan; but this is not equal judgment: as if to try who is biggest of two men, we should measure one naked, and the other over his clothes; or in comparing two pieces of Gold, weigh one with the dross and dirt it contracts in the purse, with the other purged from these in the fire: faith before temptation hath much heterogeneous stuff that cleaves to it, and goes for faith, but when temptation comes, these are discovered. Now the Christian feels corruption stir, which lay as dead before, now a cloud comes between the soul and the sweet face of God, (the sense of which latter, and the little sense of the other bore up his faith before) but these bladders prick'd, he comes now to learn the true stroke in this heavenly Art of swimming on the promise, having nothing else to bear him up but that; and a little of this carries more of the precious nature of faith in it than all the other; yea, is (like *Gideons* handful of men) stronger, when all these accessaries to faith are sent away, than when they were present; and here is all the Devil gets: instead

instead of destroying his faith which he aims at, he is the occasion of the refining of it, and thereby adding to its strength.

Secondly, The love of tempted Saints is enkindled to Christ by their temptations, and soils in their temptations. Possibly in the fit there may seem a damp upon their love, as when water is first sprinkled upon the fire; but when the conflict is a little over, and the Christian comes to himself, his love to Christ will break out like a vehement flame. First, the shame and sorrow which a gracious soul must needs feel in his bosome for his sinful mis carriage, while under the temptation, will provoke him to express his love to Christ above others, as is sweetly set forth in the Spouse, who when the cold fit of her distemper was off, and the temptation over, bestirs her to purpose, her lazy sickness is turned to love-sickness; she finds it as hard now to sit, as she did before to rise; she can rest in no place out of her Beloveds sight, but runs and asks every one she meets for him. And whence came all this vehemency of her zeal? all occasioned by her undutiful carriage to her husband: she parted so unkindly with him, that (bethinking what she had done) away she goes to make her peace. If sins committed in unregeneracy have such a force upon a gracious soul, that the thought of them, though pardoned, will still break and melt the heart into sorrow, (as we see in *Magdalen*) and prick on to shew zeal for God above others, (as in *Paul*) how much more will the sins of a Saint, who after sweet acquaintance with Jesus Christ lifts up the heel against that bosome where he hath lain, affect, yea, dissolve the heart as into so many drops of water, and that sorrow provoke him to serve God at a higher rate than others? No child so dutiful in all the family, as he who is returned from his rebellion. Again second-

ly, as his own shame, so the experience which such a one hath of Christs love above others, will increase his love. Christs love is fuel to ours. *Ex iisdem nutritur quibus constamus*; as it gives its being, so it affords growth; it is both Mother and Nurse to our love. The more Christ puts forth his love, the more heat our love gets, and next to Christs dying love, none greater than his succouring love in temptation. The Mother never hath such advantage to shew her affection to her child, as when in distress, sick, poor, or imprisoned; so neither hath Christ to his children as when tempted, yea, worsted by temptation. When his children lye in Satans prison, bleeding under the wounds of their consciences; this is the season he takes to give an experiment of his tender heart in pitying, his faithfulness in praying for them, his mindfulness in sending succour to them, yea, his dear love in visiting them by his comforting Spirit. Now when the soul hath got off some great temptation, and reads the whole history thereof together, (wherein he finds what his own weakness was to resist Satan, nay, his unfaithfulness in complying with Satan, which might have provoked Christ to leave him to the fury of Satan) now to see both his folly pardoned, and ruine graciously prevented, and that by no other hand but Christs coming in to his rescue, (as *Abishai* to *David*, 2 Sam. 21. when the Gyant thought to have slain him;) This must needs exceedingly endear Christ to the soul. At the reading of such records the Christian cannot but enquire, as *Abashuerus* concerning *Mordecai*, (who by discovering a treason had saved the Kings life) what honour hath been done to his sweet Saviour for all this. And thus Jesus Christ, whom Satan thought to bring out of the souls favour and liking, comes in the end to sit higher and surer in the Saints affection than ever.

CHAP. X.

A brief Application of the point in two Branches.

Use 1. **T**His affords a reason why God suffers his dear children to fall into temptation, because he is able to out-shoot Satan in his own bow, and in the thing wherein he thinks to out-wit the Christian, to be above him. God will not only be admired by his Saints in glory for his love in their salvation, but for his wisdom in the way to it. The love of God in saving them will be the sweet draught at the Marriage-feast, and the rare wisdom of God in effecting this, as the curious workmanship with which the cup shall be enamell'd. Now wisdom appears most in untying knots, and wading through difficulties. The more crofs wards there are in a business, the more wisdom to fit a key to the lock, to make choice of such means as shall meet with the several turnings in the same. On purpose therefore doth God suffer such temptations to intervene, that his wisdom may be the more admired in opening all thele, and leading his Saints that way to glory by which Satan thought to have brought

them to hell. The *Israelites* are bid remember all the way that God led them in the wilderness for forty years, *Deut.* 8. 2. The History of these wars (Christian) will be pleasant to read in Heaven, though bloody to fight on earth. *Moses* and *Elias* talk'd with Christ on *Tabor*, (an emblem of the sweet communion which shall pass between Christ and his Saints in glory) and what was their talk, *Luk.* 9. 30. but of his death and sufferings? It seems a discourse of our sufferings and temptations are not too low a subject for that blisful state. Indeed this left out, would make a blemish in the fair face of heavens glory. Could the damned forget the way they went in to hell, how oft the Spirit of God was wooing, and how far they were overcome by the conviction of it; in a word, how many turns and returns there were in their journey forward and backward, what possibilities, yea, probabilities, they had for heaven, when on earth; were but some hand so kind as to blot these tormenting passages out of their memories,

How from Christ's love to Satan's love the soul is drawn

Magdalen - only
disclosed her love

mories, it would ease them wonderfully. So were it possible glorifi'd Saints could forget the way wherein they went to glory, and the several dangers that interven'd from Satan, and their own back-sliding hearts, they and their God too would be losers by it, I mean in regard of his manifestative glory. What is the glory wherein God appears at *Sions* deliverance? those royal garments of salvation, that make him admired of men and Angels? but the celebration of all his attributes, according to what every one hath done towards their salvation. Now wisdom being that which the creature chiefly glories in, (and chosen by Satan for his first bait, who made *Eve* believe she should be like God in knowledge and wisdom) therefore God, to give Satan the more shameful fall, gives him leave to use his wits and wiles in tempting and troubling his children, in which lies his great advantage over the Saints, that so the way to his own Throne (where his wisdom shall at last as well as his mercy, sit in all its Royalty) may be paved with the skulls (as I may so speak) of Devils.

Secondly, This gives a strong cordial to our fainting faith, in the behalf of the Church of Christ. If all the Devils wits and wiles will not serve him to overcome one single souldier, in Christs Camp, much less shall he ever ruine the whole Army. These are dayes of great confusions in the Christian world, and the chief fear of a gracious heart is for the *Ark*, lest that should fall into the enemies hand, (and when this *Palladium* is taken, the City of God (his Church) be trod under the feet of pride) I confess Satan seems to get ground daily, he hath strangely wrigled into the bolomes and principles of many, who by the fame of their profession and zeal, had obtained in the opinion of others to be reckoned among the chief of Christs Worthies in their generation. He had sadly corrupted the truths of Christ, brought a disesteem on Ordinances, (that by this, and as a judgement for this, the womb of the Gospel is become in a great measure barren, and her children which hang about her breasts thrive not in love and holiness as of old, when the milk was not so much, nor that so spiritul) he hath had advantage by the divisions of the godly, to harden those that are wicked into a further disdain of Religion, and by the bloody wars of late years, to boil up the wrath of the Popish and profane crue to a higher pitch of rage and fury against Christs little remnant than ever; so that if ever God should suffer the sword to fall into their hand, they are disciplin'd and fitted to play the bloody butchers on Christs sheep above their fore-fathers, (neither are they so crest-fallen, but that they can hope for such a day, yea, take up some of those joys upon trust afore-hand to solace themselves, (while the rest follow.) And now (Christian) may be their confidence, together with the distracted state of Christs affairs in the world, may discompose thy spirit, concerning the issue of these rolling Providences that are over our heads; but be still, poor heart, and know, that the contest is not between the Church and Satan, but between Christ and him; these are the two Champions. Stand now, O ye army of Saints, still

by faith, to see the All-wise God wrestle with a subtil Devil. If you live not to see the period of these great confusions, yet generations after you shall behold the Almighty imite off this *Goliath's* head with his own sword, and take this cunning hunter in the toil of his own policies, that faith which ascribes greatness and wisdom to God, will shrink up Satans subtlety into a *nigrum nihil*, a thing of nothing. *Increduli timent diabolum, quasi leonem, qui fide fortes despiciunt quasi vermiculum, Bern.* Unbelief fears Satan as a Lion, faith treads on him as a worm. Behold therefore thy God at work, and promise thy self, that what he is about will be an excellent piece; none can drive him from his work. The Pilot is beaten from the helm and can do little in a storm, but let the ship go adrift. The Architect cannot work when night draws the curtain, yea, is driven off the Scaffold with a storm of rain; such workmen are the wisest counsellors and mightiest Princes on earth. A pinch may come, when it is as vain to say, Help O King, as, Help O Beggar; mans wisdom may be levell'd with folly, but God is never interrupted. All the plots of hell and commotions on earth, have not so much as shak'd Gods hand, to spoil one letter or line that he hath been drawing. The mysteriousness of his Providence may hang a curtain before his work, that we cannot see what he is doing; but then when darkness is about him, righteousness is the seat of his throne for ever. O where's our faith (Sirs!) let God be wife, and all men and Devils fools. What though thou feest a *Babel* more likely to go up, than a *Babylon* to be pull'd down, yet believe God is making his secret approaches, and will clap his Ladders on a sudden to the walls thereof: Suppose truth were prisoner with *Joseph*, and errour the Courtier, to have its head lift up by the favour of the times; yet dost not remember, that the way to truths preferment lies through the prison? yea, what though the Church were like *Jonah* in the Whales belly, swallowed up to the eye of reason by the fury of men; yet dost not remember the Whale had not power to digest the Prophet? O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead. Stay while Christ tries his skill before you give it over; bring Christ by your prayers to its grave, to speak a Resurrection word. Admirable hath the Saints faith been in such straits; as *Josephs*, who pawn'd his bones that God would visit his brethren, willing them to lay him where he believ'd they should be brought. *Jeremiah* purchaseth a field of his Uncle, and pays down the money for it, and this when the *Caldean* Army quartered about *Jerusalem*, ready to take the City, and carry him with the rest into *Babylon*; and all this by Gods appointment, *Jer. 22. 6, 7, 8.* that he might shew the Jews by this, how undoubtedly he (in that sad juncture of time) did believe the performance of the promise for their return out of captivity. Indeed God counts himself exceedingly disparaged in the thoughts of his people, (though at the lowest ebb of his Churches affairs) if his naked word, and the single bond of his promise, will not be taken as sufficient security to their faith for its deliverance.

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VERSE 12.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the darknejs of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

THE Words are coupled to the precedent with that causal Particle *For*, which either refers to the two foregoing Verses, and then they are a further reason, pressing the necessity of Christian Fortitude in the Tenth Verse, and Furniture in the Eleventh; or else to the last words of the eleventh Verse, where the Apostle having described the Saints grand Enemy to be Satan, and describ'd him in one of his Attributes, his wily subtilty, he in this further displays him in his proper colours, not to weaken the Saints hands, but waken their care, that seeing their Enemy marching up in a full body, they might stand in better order to receive his Charge. Whereby the way we may observe the Apostles simpliciry and plain dealing; he doth not undervalue the strength

of the enemy, and represent him inconsiderable, as Captains use to keep their Souldiers together by slighting the power of their Adversary; no, he tells them the worst at first. If Satan had been to set out his own power, he could have challeng'd no more than is here granted him. See here the difference between Christ dealing with his Followers, and Satan with his. Satan dares not let sinners know who that God is they fight against; this were enough to breed a mutiny in the Devils Camp. Silly souls, they are drawn into the field by a false report of God and his ways, and are kept there together with lies and fair tales, but Christ is not afraid to shew his Saints their enemy in all his power and principality, the weakness of God being stronger than the powers of Hell.

July 7 1809

CHAP. I.

Jan 11 1863

Sheweth, the Christians Life here to be a continual wrestling with sin and Satan, and the paucity of those who are true wrestlers, as also how the true wrestlers should manage their Combate.

THE Words contain a lively Description of a bloody and lasting War between the Christian and his implacable enemy; in which we may observe,

First, The Christians state in this life, set out by this word *Wrestling*.

Secondly, The Assailants that appear in Arms against the Christian, who are described; First, Negatively, *Not flesh and blood*: Or rather comparatively, not chiefly flesh and blood. Secondly, positively, *but against Principalities, Powers, &c.*

SECT. I.

First, For the first, the wrestling or conflicting state of a Christian in this life, is rendred observable here by a threefold circumstance.

First, The kind of Combate which the Christians state is here set out by, *ἐστὶν ἡμῖν ὡς μάχη*, which though it be used sometimes for a wrestling of sport and recreation, yet here to set out the sharpness of the Christians encounter; there are two things in wrestling that render it a sharper combate than others. First, Wrestling is not properly fighting against a multitude, but when one enemy singles out another, and enters the List with him, each exerting their whole force and strength against

one another, as *David* and *Goliath*, when the whole Armies stood as it were in a Ring to behold the bloody issue of that Duel. Now this is more fierce than to fight in an Army, where though the battel be sharp and long, the Souldier is not alwayes engaged, but falls off when he hath discharged, and takes breath a while; yea, possibly may escape without hurt or stroke, because there the enemies aim is not at this or that man, but at the whole heap; but in wrestling one cannot escape so, he being the particular object of the enemies fury, must needs be shaken and tried to purpose. Indeed the word *μάχη* signifies such a strife, as makes the body shake again, *quia corpus pallescit*. Satan hath not only a general malice against the Army of Saints, but a spite against thee *John*, thee *Joane*: He'll single thee out for his enemy. We find *Jacob* when alone, a man wrestled with him. As God delights to have private communion with his single Saints, so the Devil to try it hand to hand with the Christian, when he gets him alone. As we lose much comfort, when we do not apply the Promise and Providence of God to our particular persons and conditions, God loves me, pardons me, takes care of me: the water at the Town-Conduit doth me no good, if I want a Pipe to empty it into my Cistern: so it obstructs our care and watchfulness, when we conceive

ceive of Satans wrath and fury, as bent in general against the Saints, and not against me in particular. O how careful would a soul be in duty, if as going to Church or Closet he had such a serious meditation as this, Now Satan is at my heels to hinder me in my work, if my God help me not!

Secondly, 'Tis a close combat. Armies fight at some distance, Wrestlers grapple hand to hand. An arrow shot from afar may be seen and shunn'd, but when the enemy hath hold of one, there is no declining, but either he must resist manfully, or fall shamefully at his enemies foot. Satan comes close up, and gets within the Christian, takes his hold of his very flesh and corrupt nature, and by this shakes him.

Secondly, The universality of the combat. We wrestle, *ἡμῶν πάλιν*, which comprehends all, on purpose you may perceive the Apostle changeth the Pronoun *ἡμῶν* in the former Verse, into *ἡμῶν* in this, that he may include himself as well as them; as if he had said, the quarrel is with every Saint. Satan neither fears to assault the Minister, nor despisth to wrestle with the meanest Saint in the Congregation, great and small, Minister and People, all must wrestle. Not one part of Christs Army, in the field, and the other at ease in their Quarters, where no enemy comes, here are enemies enough to engage all at once.

Thirdly, The permanency or duration of this combat, and that lies in the Tense, *ἔστιν ἡμῶν πάλιν*. Not, our wrestling was at first Conversion, but now over, and we past the Pikes; not, we shall wrestle when sickness comes, and death comes, but our wrestling is, the enemy is ever in sight of us, yea, in fight with us, there is an evil of every dayes temptation, which (like Paul's bonds) abides us wherever we become. So that these Particulars summ'd up, will amount to this Point:

SECT. II.

Doct. The Christians life is a continual wrestling. He is as *Jeremy* said of himself, born a man of strife, or what the Prophet to *Asa*, may be said to every Christian; from hence thou shalt have wars, from thy spiritual birth to thy natural death, from the hour when thou first didst set thy face to heaven, till thou shalt set thy foot in heaven. *Israels* march out of *Egypt* was in Gospel-sense our taking the field against sin and Satan; And when had they peace? not till they lodged their Colours in *Canaan*. No condition wherein the Christian is here below is quiet. Is it prosperity or adversity? here is work for both hands, to keep pride and security down in the one, faith and patience up in the other: no place which the Christian can call privileged ground. Lot in *Sodom* wrestled with the wicked Inhabitants thereof, his righteous soul being vexed with their unclean Conversation. And how fares he at *Zaar*? Do not his own Daughters bring a spark of *Sodoms* fire into his own bed, whereby he is inflamed with lust? Some have thought if they were but in such a family, under such a Ministry, out of such occasions, O then they should never be tempted as now they are: I confess change of Air is a

great help to weak Nature, and these fore-named as vantage-ground against Satan; but thinkest thou to fly from Satans presence thus? No, though thou shouldst take the wings of the morning, he would fly after thee; These may make him change his method in tempting, but not lay down his design; so long as his old friend is alive within, he will be knocking at the door without. No duty can be performed without wrestling: The Christian needs his Sword as much as his Trowel. He wrestles with a body of flesh; this to the Christian in duty is as the beast to the traveller; he cannot go his journey without it, and much ado to go with it. If the flesh be kept high and lusty, then 'tis wanton, and will not obey; if low, then it's weak, and soon tires: Thus the Christian rides but little ground, because he must go his weak bodies pace. He wrestles with a body of sin as well as of flesh, this mutters and murmurs when the soul is taking up any duty. Sometimes it keeps the Christian from duty, so that he cannot do what he would. As *Paul* said, *I would have come once and again, but Satan hindred me*. I would have prayed, may the Christian say, at such a time, and meditated on the Word I heard, the mercies I received at another, but this enemy hindred. 'Tis true indeed, Grace sways the Scepter in such a Soul; yet as School-boys taking their time when their Master is abroad, do shut him out, and for a while Lord it in Mis-rule, though they are whipt for it afterwards: thus the unregenerate part takes advantage when Grace is not on its Watch, to disturb its government, and shut it out from duty; though this last makes the soul more severe in mortifying, yet it costs some scuffle before it can recover its Throne, and when it cannot shut from duty, yet then is the Christian wofully yok'd with it in duty; it cannot do what it doth as it would; many a letter in its Copy doth this enemy spoil, while he jogs him with impertinent thoughts; when the Christian is praying, then Satan and the flesh are a prating; he cries, and they louder, to put him out, or drown his cry. Thus we see the Christian is assail'd on every side by his enemy; and how can it be other, when the seeds of war are laid deep in the natures of both, which can never be rooted up till the Devil cease to be a Devil, sin to be sin, and the Saint to be a Saint? Though Wolves may snarl at one another, yet soon are quiet again, because the quarrel is not in their nature; but the Wolf and the Lamb can never be made Friends. Sin will lust against Grace, and Grace draw upon sin whenever they meet.

SECT. III.

Use 1. First, This may reprove such as wrestle; but against whom? against God, not against sin and Satan. These are bold men indeed, who dare try a fall with the Almighty; yet such they are, and a Wo pronounced against them, *Isa. 54. 9.* *Wo unto him that striiveth with his Maker.* 'Tis ealie to tell which of these will be worsted. What can he do, but break his shins, that dasheth them against a Rock? A goodly battel there is like to be, when thorns contest with stubble, and stubble with fire.

But

But where live those Giants, that dare enter the List with the great God? what are their names, that we may know them, and brand them for creatures above all other unworthy to live? take heed, O thou who askest, that the wretched man whom thou seemest so to despise, be not found in thine own clothes it self. *Judas* was the Traytor, though he would not answer to his name, but put it off with a *Master is it I?* and so mayest thou be the fighter against God. The heart is deceitful. Even holy *David*, for all his anger was so hot against the rich man, that took away the poor mans Ewe-Lamb, that he bound it with an oath, the man should not live who had done it, yet proves at last to be himself the man, as the Prophet told him, *2 Sam. 12.*

Now there are two ways wherein men wrestle against God: First, when they wrestle against his Spirit. Secondly, when they wrestle against his Providence.

First, when they wrestle against his Spirit. We read of the Spirits striving with the Creature, *Gen. 6:3. My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* Where the striving is not in anger and wrath to destroy them, (that God could do without any stir or scuffle) but a loving strife and contest with man. The old world was running with such a career headlong into their ruine, he sends his Spirit to interpose, and by his counsels and reproofs to offer, as it were, to stop and reclaim them. As if one seeing another ready to offer violence on himself, should strive to get the knife out of his hand, with which he would do the mischief: Or one that hath a purse of Gold in his hand to give, should follow another by all manner of entreaties, striving with him to accept and take it. Such a kind of strife is this of the Spirit's with men. They are the lusts of men, (those bloody Instruments of death, with which sinners are mischiefing themselves) that the holy Spirit strives by sweet counsels and entreaties to get out of our hands. They are Christs, his grace and eternal life he strives to make us accept at the hands of Gods mercy; and for repelling the Spirit thus striving with them, sinners are justly counted fighters against God: *Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. Act. 7:51.* Now there is a twofold striving of the Spirit, and so of our wrestling against it. First, the Spirit strives in his messengers with sinners: They coming on his errand; and not their own, he voucheth the faithful counsels, reproofs, and exhortations which they give as his own act. *Noah* that Preacher of righteousness, what he said to the old world, is called, the preaching of the Spirit, *1 Pet. 3. 19.* The pains that *Moses*, *Aaron*, and other servants of God took in instructing *Israel*, is call'd the instruction of the Spirit, *Nehem. 9. 20.* So that when the Word, which Gods Ministers bring in his Name, is rejected, the faithful counsels they give are thrown at sinners heels and made light of, then do they strive with the Spirit, and wrestle against Christ as really, as if he visibly in his own Person had been in the Pulpit, and preached the Sermon to them. When God comes to reckon with sinners, it will prove so: then God will rub up your memories, and mind you of his striving with you, and your unkind re-

sisting him. They, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, shall know they had a Prophet among them, *Ezek. 2. 5.* Now men soon forget whom and what they hear; ask them what was preft upon their conscience in such a Sermon, they have forgot; what were the precious truths laid out in another, and they are lost; and well were it for them if their memories were no better in another world: it would ease their torments more than a little. But then they shall know they had a Prophet among them, and what a price they had with him in their hands, though it was in fools keeping. They shall know what he was, and what he said, though a thousand years past, as fresh as if it were done but last night. The more zealous and compassionate, the more painful and powerful he was in his place, the greater shall their sin be found, to break from such holy violence offered to do them good. Surely God will have something for the sweat, yea lives of his servants which were worn out in striving with such rebellious ones. May be yet, sinners, your firmament is clear, no cloud to be seen that portends a storm; but know (as you use to say) Winter does not rot in the clouds, you shall have it at last: every threatening which your faithful Ministers have denounced against you out of the Word, God is bound to make good. He confirmeth the Word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers, *Isa. 44. 21.* and that in Judgement against sinners, confirming the threatnings, as well as in mercy performing the promises, which they declare as the portion of his children. But it will be time enough to ask such on a sick-bed, or a dying hour, whether the words of the Lord delivered by their faithful Preachers have not taken hold of them. Some have confessed with horrour they have, as the Jews, *Zech. 1. 6. Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us, so hath he dealt with us.* Secondly, the Spirit strives with men more immediately, when he takes his inward approaches to the consciences of men, debating in their own bosoms the case with them; one while he shews them their sins in their bloody colours, and whither they will surely bring them, if not lookt to timely, which he doth so convincingly, that the creature smells sometimes the very fire and brimstone about him, and is at present in a temporary Hell; another while he falls a parlying and treating with them, making gracious overtures to the sinner, if he will return at his reproof, presents the grace of the Gospel, and opens a door of hope for his recovery, yea, falls a wooing and beseeching of him to throw down his rebellious arms, and come to Christ for life, whose heart is in a present disposition to receive and embrace the first motion the returning sinner makes for mercy. Now when the Spirit of God follows the sinner from place to place, and time to time, suggesting such motions, and renewing his old suit, and the creature shall sling out of the Spirits hands thus striving with him, *re infecta*, as far from renouncing his lusts, or taking any liking to Christ as ever; This is to resist the Spirit to his face, and it carries so much malignity in it, that (even where it hath not been final) poor humbled souls have been so over-set with the horrour of it, that

that they could not for a long time be perswaded, but that it was the unpardonable sin. Take heed therefore sinners, how you use the Spirit when he comes, knocking at the door of your hearts: Open at his knock, and he will be your guest, you shall have his sweet company; repulse him, and you have not a Promise he will knock again. And if once he leave striving with thee, unhappy man, thou art lost for ever; thou liest like a ship cast up by the waves upon some high Rock, where the tide never comes to fetch it off. Thou mayest come to the Word, converse with other Ordinances, but in vain. 'Tis the Spirit of them which is both tyde and wind, to set the soul a float, and carry it on, or else it lies like a ship on dry ground which stirs not.

Secondly, we wrestle against God when we wrestle with his Providence, and that two wayes; First, when we are discontented with his providential disposure of us. Gods carving for us doth not please us so, but that we are objecting against his dealings towards us, at least muttering something with the fool in our hearts, which God hears as lightly as man our words. God counts when we begin to quarrel with him, when we do not acquiesce in, and say Amen to his Providence, whatever it is. He calls it *a contending with the Almighty*, Job 40. 1. *yea, a reproving of God*. And he is a bold man sure that dare find fault with God, and article against Heaven. God challengeth him, whoever he is that doth this, to answer it at his peril. *He that reproveth God, let him answer it*; v. 2. of the Chapter forementioned. It was high time for Job to have done, when he hears what a sense God puts upon those unwary words, which dropt from him in the anguish of his spirit, and paroxysme of his sufferings; contend with the Almighty? reprove God? Good man, how blank he is, and cries out, *I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*. Let God but pardon what is past, and he shall hear such language no more. O Sirs, take heed of this wrestling above all other. Contention is uncomfortable, with whomsoever it is we fall out. Neighbours or friends, wife or husband, children or servants; but worst of all with God. If God cannot please thee, but thy heart riseth against him, what hopes are there of thy pleasing him, who will take nothing kindly from that man who is angry with him? And how can love to God be preserved in a discontented heart that is alwayes muttering against him? Love cannot think any evil of God, nor endure to hear any speak evil of him, but it must take Gods part, as *Jonathan Davids*, when *Saul* spake basely of him; and when it cannot be heard, will, like him, arise and be gone. When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan, but not to grumble. If thou wilt ease thy incumbred spirit into Gods bosome by prayer, and humbly wrestle with God on thy knees, love is for thee, and will help thee to the best arguments thou canst use to God: But if thou wilt vent thy distempered passions, and shew a mutinous spirit against God, this stabs it to the heart.

Secondly, we wrestle against Providence, when uncorrigible under the various dispensations of

God towards us. Providence has a voice, if we had an ear; mercies should draw, afflictions drive; now when neither fair means nor foul do us good, but we are impenitent under both; this is to wrestle against God with both hands. Either of these have their peculiar aggravations. One is against love, and so dis-ingenuous; the other is against the smart of his rod, and therein we slight his anger, and are cruel to our selves in kicking against the pricks. Mercy should make us ashamed, wrath afraid to sin. He that is not ashamed, has not the spirit of a man. He that is not afraid when smitten, is worse than a beast, who stands in awe of whip and spur. Sometimes mercy (especially these outward mercies, which have a pleasing relish to the carnal part in a Christian) hath prov'd a snare to the best of men: but then affliction useth to recover them; but when affliction makes men worse, and they harden themselves against God, to sin more and more while the rod is on them, what is like to reclaim them? few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse. He that will sin, though he goes in pain, will much more if that once be gone. But take heed of thus contesting with God. There is nothing got by scuffling with God, but blows, or worse. If he say he will afflict thee no more, 'tis even the worst he can say; 'tis as much as if he should say, he'll be in thy debt till another world, and there pay thee all together. But if he means thee mercy, thou shalt hear from him in some sharper affliction than ever. He hath wedges that can rive thee, wert thou a more knotty piece than thou art. *Are there yet the treasures of wickedness, and the scant measure that is abominable?* (saith God to Israel, Micah 6. 9.) what uncorrigible, though the Lords voice cryeth unto the City, bidding you hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it? See what course God resolves on, v. 13. *Therefore I will make thee sick in smiting of thee*. As if he had said, my other Physick I see was too weak, it did not work to turn your stomach, but I will prepare a potion that shall make you sick at heart.

Secondly, it reproves those who seem to wrestle against sin, but not according to the Word of Command that Christ gives. There is a Law in wrestling which must be observed, 2 Tim. 2. 5. *If a man also strive for Masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully*. He alludes to the Roman games, to which there were Judges appointed to see that no foul play were offered contrary to the law for wrestling; the prize being denied to such, though they did foil their adversary, which the Apostle improves to make the Christian careful in his war, as being under a stricter Law and Discipline, that requires not only valour to fight, but obedience to fight, by order, and according to the Word of Command: Now few do this that go for great Wrestlers.

First, some while they wrestle against one sin embrace another; and in this case 'tis not the person wrestles against sin, but one sin wrestles with another, and 'tis no wonder to see thieves fall out when they come to divide the spoil; Lusts are divers, Tit. 4. 3. and 'tis hard to please many Masters, especially when their commands are so contrary; when pride bids

SECT. IV.

bids lay on in bravery, lavish out in entertainment, covetousness bids lay up; when malice bids revenge, carnal policy faith, conceal the wrath, though not forgive. When Lust sends to his Whores, Hypocrisie pulls him back for shame of the world. Now is he Gods Champion that resists one sin at the command of another, it may be a worse?

Secondly, Some wrestle, but they are prest into the Field, not Voluntiers, their slavish fear scares them at present from their lust; so that the Combate is rather betwixt their Conscience and Will, than them and their Lust: Give me such a sin, faith Will; No, faith Conscience, it will scald, and throws it away. A man may love the Wine, though he is loth to have his Lips burnt; *Hypocrites themselves are afraid to burn.* In such combats the Will at last prevails, either by bribing the Understanding to present the Lust it desires in a more pleasing Dress (that Conscience may not be scared with such hideous apparitions of wrath) or by pacifying Conscience with some promise of Repentance for the future, or by forbearing some sin for the present, which it can best spare; thereby to gain the reputation of something like a reformation; or if all this will not do, then (prompted by the fury of its lust) the Will proclaims open war against Conscience, sinning in the face of it, like some wild Horse (impatient of the Spur which pricks him, and Bridle that curbs him) gets the Bit between his teeth, and runs with full speed, till at last he easeth himself of his Rider; and then where he sees fattest pasture, no Hedge or Ditch can withhold him, till in the end you find him starving in some Pound for his trespass: Thus many sin at such rate, that Conscience can no longer hold the Reins, nor sit the Saddle, but is thrown down and laid for dead; and then the Wretches range where their Lusts can have the fullest meal, till at last they pay for their stolen pleasures most dearly, when Conscience comes to it self, pursues them, and takes them more surely by the throat than ever, never to let them go till it brings them before Gods Tribunal.

Thirdly, others wrestle with sin, but they do not hate it, and therefore they are favourable to it, and seek not the life of sin as their deadly enemy; these wrestle in jest, and not in earnest; the wounds they give sin one day, are heal'd by the next. Let men resolve never so strongly against sin, yet it will creep again into their favour, till the love of sin be quenched in the heart, and this fire will never die of it self, the love of Christ must quench the love of sin, as *Jerome* excellently, *Unus Amor extinguitalium.* This heavenly fire will indeed put out that flame of hell, which he illustrates by *Abashuerus* his carriage to *Vashti* his Queen, who in the first Chapter makes a Decree in all haste, that she comes no more before him; but when his passion is a little down, c. 2. v. 1. he begins to relent towards her, which his Council perceiving, presently seek out for a beautiful Virgin, on whom the King might place his Love, and take into his Royal Bed, which done, we hear no more of *Vashti*: then, and not till then will the Souls Decree stand against sin, when the Soul hath taken Christ into his bosom.

Secondly, To the Saints, seeing your Life is a continual wrestling here on earth, tis your wisdom to study how you may best manage the combate with your worst Enemy; which that you may do, take these few Directions.

First, Look thou goest not into the field without thy Second; my meaning is, engage God by prayer to stand at thy back; God is in a League offensive and defensive with thee, but he looks to be called. Did the *Ephraimites* take it ill, that *Gideon* called not them into the Field, and may not God much more? as if thou meanest to steal a victory before he should know it. Thou hast more valour than *Moses*, who would not stir without God; no, though he sent an Angel for his Lieutenant. Thou art wiser than *Jacob*, who to overcome *Esau*, now marching up, turns from him, and falls upon God; he knew if he could wrestle with God, he might trust God to deal with his Brother. Engage God, and the Back-door is shut, no Enemy can come behind thee; yea, thine Enemy shall fall before thee. *God turn the counsel of Abithophel into foolishness*, faith *David*; Heaven faith Amen to his Prayer, and the Wretch hangs himself. *July 7 1599*

Secondly, Be very careful of giving thine enemy hand-hold. Wrestlers strive to fasten upon some part or other, which gives them advantage more easily to throw their Adversary; to prevent which, they used, First, to lay aside their Garments. Secondly, to anoint their Bodies. For the first, Christian, labour to put off the old man, which is most personal, that corruption, which *David* calls his own iniquity, *Psal.* 18. 23. This is the skirt which Satan lays hold of; observe what it is, and mortifie it daily, then Satan will retreat with shame, when he sees the head of that enemy upon the wall, which should have betrayed thee into his hands.

Secondly, The Roman Wrestlers used to anoint their bodies; so do thou: Bathe thy soul with the frequent meditation of Christs Love. Satan will find little welcom where Christs love dwells; Love will kindle Love, and that will be as a wall of fire to keep off Satan, it will make thee disdain the offer of a sin, and as oyl supple thy joynts, and make agile to offend thy enemy. Think how Christ wrestled in thy quarrel; Sin, Hell, and Wrath had all come full mouth upon thee, had not he coped with them in the way. And canst thou find in thy heart to requite his Love, by betraying his Glory into the hands of sin, by cowardise or treachery? Say not thou lovest him, so long as thou canst lay those sins in thy bosom, which pluckt his heart out of his bosom. It were strange if a Child should keep, and delight to use no other Knife, but that wherewith his Father was stabb'd.

Thirdly, Improve the advantage thou gettest at any time wisely. Sometimes the Christian hath his Enemy on the hip, yea, on the ground, can set his foot on the very neck of his pride, and throw away his unbelief, as a thing absurd and unreasonable; now

now (as a wise wrestler) fall with all thy weight upon thine enemy; though a man think it foul play to strike when his adversary is down, yet do not thou so complement with sin, as to let it breath or rise. Take heed thou beest not charged of God, as once *Ahab*, for letting go this enemy now in thy hands, whom God hath appointed to destruction. Learn a little wisdom of the Serpents brood, who when they had Christ under their foot, never thought they had him sure enough; no, not when dead, and therefore both seal and watch his grave. Thus do thou to hinder the Resurrection of thy sin, seal it down with stronger purposes, solemn covenants, and watch it by a wakeful circumspect walking.

Use 3. This is ground of consolation to the weak Christian, who disputes against the truth of his grace, from the inward conflicts and fightings he hath with his lusts, and is ready to say (like *Gideon*, in regard of outward enemies) *If God be with me, why is all this befallen me?* why do I find such strugglings in me, provoking me to sin, pulling me back from that which is good? Why dost ask? The answer is soon given, because thou art a Wrestler, not a Conqueror. Thou mistakest the state of a Christian in this life: when one is made a Christian, he is not presently call'd to triumph over his slain enemies, but carried into the field to meet and fight them. The state of grace is the commencing of a war against sin, not the ending of it; rather than thou shalt not have an enemy to wrestle with, God himself will come in a disguise into the field, and appear to be thine enemy. Thus when *Jacob* was alone, a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day, and therefore set thy heart at rest if this be thy scruple: Thy Soul may rather take comfort in this, that thou art a wrestler. This struggling within thee, if upon the right ground, and to the right end, doth evidence there are two Nations within thee, two contrary natures, the one from earth earthly, and the other from heaven heavenly; yea, for thy further comfort know, though thy corrupt nature be the elder, yet it shall serve the younger.

Use 4. O how should this make thee (Christian) long to be gone home, where there is none of this stir and scuffle! 'Tis strange, that every hour seems not a day, and every day a year, till death founds thy joyful retreat, and calls thee off the field, where the bullets lie so thick, and thou art fighting for thy self with thy deadly enemies, to come to Court, where not swords, but Palms are seen in the Saints hands; not drums, but harps; not groans of bleeding souldiers and wounded consciences, but sweet

and ravishing musick is heard of Triumphant Victors caroling the praises of God and the Lamb, through whom they have overcome. Well, Christians, while you are below, comfort your selves with these things; There is a place of Rest remains for the people of God: You do not beat the air, but wrestle for a Heaven that is yonder above these clouds; you have your worst first, the best will follow. You wrestle but to win a Crown, and win to wear it, yea wear never to lose it, which once on, none shall take off, or put you to the hazard of a battel more. Here we overcome to fight again, the battel of one temptation may be over, but the war remains. What peace can we have, as long as Devils can come abroad out of their holes, or any thing of sinful nature remains in our selves unmortified? which will even fight upon its knees, and strike with one arm while the other is cut off; but when death comes, the last stroak is struck; this good Physician will perfectly cure thee of thy spiritual blindness and lameness (as the Martyr told his fellow at the stake, bloody *Berner* would do their bodies.) What is it, Christian, which takes away the joy of thy life, but the wrestlings and combats which this boosome enemy puts thee to? Is not this the *Peninah*, that vexing and disturbing thy spirit, hath kept thee off many a sweet meal, thou mightest have had in communion with God and his Saints? or if thou hast come, hath made thee cover the Altar of God with thy tears and groans? and will it not be a happy hand that cuts the knot, and sets thee loose from thy deadness, hypocrisie, pride, and what not, wherewith thou wert yoked? 'Tis life which is thy loss, and death which is thy gain. Be but willing to endure the rending of the vail of thy flesh, and thou art where thou wouldst be, out of the reach of sin, at rest in the bosome of thy God. And why should a short evil of pain affright thee more, than the deliverance from a continual torment of sins evil ravish thee? Some you know have chose to be cut, rather than to be ground daily with the stone, and yet, may be their pain comes again; and canst thou not quietly think of dying to be delivered from the torment of thy sins, never to return more? and yet that is not the half that death doth for thee: Peace is sweet after war, ease after pain; but what tongue can express what joy, what glory must fill the creature at the first sight of God, and that blessed company? none but one that dwells there can tell. Did we know more of that blissful state, we Ministers would find it as hard a work to perswade Christians to be willing to live here so long, as now it is to perswade them to be willing to dye so soon.

CHAP. II.

wherein is shewed what is meant by flesh and blood; how the Christian doth not, and how he doth wrestle against the same.

SECT. I.

Now follows the description of the Saints enemies, with whom he is to wrestle;

First, described Negatively, *Not with flesh and blood,*

Secondly, Positively, *But against Principalities, and Powers, &c.*

First, for the Negative part of the Description; we are not to take it for a pure negation, as if we had no conflict with flesh and blood, but wholly and solely to engage against Satan: but by way of comparison, not only with flesh and blood, and in some sense, not chiefly. It is usual in Scripture such manner of phrases, *Luke 14. 12. Call not thy friends to dinner, but the poor;* that is, not only those, so as to neglect the poor. Now what is meant here by flesh and blood? there is a double interpretation of the words.

First, by flesh and blood may be meant our bosome corruptions; that sin which is in our corrupt nature, so oft called flesh in the Scripture; *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,* and sometimes flesh and blood, as *Math. 16. 17. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this,* that is, this Confession thou hast made comes from above; thy fleshly corrupt mind could never have found out this supernatural truth, thy sinful Will would never have embraced it. So, *1 Cor. 15. 50. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,* that is, sinful mortal flesh, as it's expounded in the words following. So, *Gal. 1. 11. I consulted not with flesh and blood,* that is, carnal reason. Now this bosome enemy may be called flesh, partly from its derivation, and partly from its operation; from its derivation, because it's derived and propagated to us by natural generation; thus *Adam* is said to beget *a son in his own likeness*, sinful as he was, as well as mortal and miserable: yea, the holiest Saint on earth having flesh in him, derives this corrupt and sinful nature to his child, as the circumcised Jew begat an uncircumcised child; and the wheat cleans'd and fan'd (being sown) comes up with a husk, *Joh. 3. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh.*

Secondly, it's call'd flesh from the operations of this corrupt nature, which are fleshly and carnal. The reasonings of the corrupt mind fleshly, therefore called the carnal mind, incapable indeed of the things of God, which it neither doth nor can perceive: as the Sun doth *obscure superiora dum revelat inferiora*; hide the Heavens which are above it from us, while it reveals things beneath; so carnal reason leaves the creature in the dark concerning spiritual truths, when it is most able to conceive and discourse of creature-excellencies, and carnal interests here below. What a childish question, for

so wise a man, did *Nicodemus* put to Christ? though Christ to help him did wrap his speech in a carnal phrase. If fleshly reason cannot understand spiritual truths when thus accommodated, and the notions of the Gospel translated into its own language, what skill is it like to have of them, if put to read them in their original tongue? I mean, if this garment of carnal expression were taken off, and spiritual truths in their naked hue presented to its view. The motions of the natural will are carnal, and therefore, *Rom. 8. 5. They that are after the flesh,* are said to *mind the things of the flesh.* All its desires, delights, cares, fears, are in and of carnal things; it savours spiritual food no more than an Angel fleshly. *Omnis vita gustu ducitur:* What we cannot relish we will hardly make our daily food. Every creature hath its proper diet, the Lion eats not grass, nor the horse flesh; what is food to the carnal heart, is poison to the gracious, and that which is pleasing to the gracious, is distastful to the carnal. Now according to this interpretation the sense of the Apostle is not, as if the Christian had no combat with his corrupt nature, (for in another place it's said, the spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and this enemy is called *diaplasia inwards*, the sin that besets the Christian round) but to aggravate his conflict with this enemy by the access of a foreign power, Satan who strikes in with this domestick enemy. As if while a King is fighting with his own mutinous subjects, some out-landish Troops should join with them, now he may be said not to fight with his subjects, but with a foreign power. The Christian wrestled not with his naked corruptions, but with Satan in them; were there no Devil, yet we should have our hands full in resisting the corruptions of our own hearts; but the access of this enemy makes the battle more terrible, because he heads them who is a Captain so skilful and experienced. Our sin is the Engine, Satan is the Engineer, lust the bait, Satan the Angler: When a fool is enticed by his own lust, he is said to be tempted, *Jam. 1. 14.* because both Satan and our own lust concur to the compleating the sin.

Use. First, Let this make thee, Christian, ply the work of mortification close; it is no policy to let thy lusts have arms, who are sure to rise and declare against thee when thine enemy comes. *Achish* his Nobles did but wisely, in that they would not trust *David* in their Army when to fight against *Israel*, lest in the battle he should be an Adversary to them: And darest thou go to duty, or engage in any action, where Satan will appear against thee, and not endeavour to make sure of thy pride, unbelief, &c. that they joyn not with thine Enemy?

Secondly, Are Satan and thine own flesh against thee,

thee, not single corruption, but edg'd with his policy, and back'd by his power? see then what need thou hast of more help than thy own grace; take heed of grappling with him in the strength of thy naked grace; Here thou hast two to one against thee. Satan was too hard for Adam, though he went so well appointed into the field, because left to himself; much more easily will he foil thee; cling therefore about thy God for strength, get him with thee, and then though a worm, thou shalt be able to deal with this Serpent.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Flesh and blood is interpreted as a *periphrasis* of man. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, that is, not with man, who is here described by that part which chiefly distinguisheth him from the Angelical nature: *Touch me, saith Christ, and handle me, a spirit hath not flesh.* Now according to this Interpretation observe;

First, How meanly the Spirit of God speaks of man.

Secondly, Where he lays the stress of the Saints battle, not in resisting flesh and blood, but Principalities and Powers; where the Apostle excludes not our combat with man, for the war is against the Serpent and his seed. As wide as the world is, it cannot peaceably hold the Saints and wicked together; but his intent is to shew, what a complicated enemy (mans wrath and Satans inter-woven together) we have to deal with.

First, for the first, How meanly doth the Spirit of God speak of man, calling him flesh, and blood? Man hath a Heaven-born soul, which makes him a kin to Angels, yea, to the God of them who is the Father of Spirits; but this is passed by in silence, as if God would not own that which is tainted with sin, and not the creature God at first made it: or because the soul, though of such noble extraction, yet being so immerst in sensuality, deserves no other name than Flesh, which part of man levels him with the beast, and is here intended to express the weakness and frailty of mans nature. 'Tis the phrase which the Holy Ghost expresseth the weakness and impotency of a creature by, *Isa. 31. 3. They are men, and their horses are flesh*, that is, weak; as on the contrary, when he would set out the power and strength of a thing, he opposeth it to flesh, *2 Cor. 10. 3. Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty*: and so in the Text, not Flesh and Blood, but Powers. As if he should say, Had you no other to fear but a weak forry man, it were not worth the providing arms or ammunition; but you have Enemies that neither are Flesh, nor are resisted with Flesh; so that here we see what a weak creature man is, not only weaker than Angels, as they are Spirits, and he Flesh, but in some sense beneath the beasts, as the flesh of man is frailer than the flesh of beasts: therefore the Spirit of God compares man to the grass, which soon withers, *Isa. 40. 6.* and his goodliness to the flower of the field. Yea, he is called vanity, *Psal. 62. 9. Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie*, both alike vain; only the rich and the great man, his vanity is co-

vered with honour, wealth, &c. which are here called a lie, because they are not what they seem, and so worse than plain vanity, which is known to be so, and deceives not.

Use. First, Is man but frail Flesh? let this humble thee, O man, in all thy excellency, flesh is but one remove from filth and corruption: thy soul is the salt that keeps thee sweet, or else thou wouldst stink above ground. Is it thy beauty thou pridest in? Flesh is grass, but beauty is the vanity of this vanity. This goodliness is like the flower, which lasts not so long as the grass, appears in its month, and is gone, yea, like the beauty of the flower, which fades while the flower stands. How soon will times plough make furrows in thy face, yea, one fit of an Ague so change thy countenance, as shall make thy doting Lovers afraid to look on thee? Is it strength? alas, it is an arm of flesh, which withers often in the stretching forth; ere long thy blood which is now warm, will freeze in thy veins; thy Spring crown'd with May-buds, will tread on December's heel; thy marrow dry in thy bones, thy sinews shrink, thy legs bow under the weight of thy body, thy eye-strings crack, thy tongue not able to call for help; yea, thy heart with thy flesh shall fail; and now thou, who art such a Giant, take a turn if thou canst in thy Chamber, yea, raise but thy head from thy pillow if thou art able, or call back thy breath, which is making haste to be gone out of thy nostrils, never to return more; and darest thou glory in that which so soon may be prostrate?

Is it wisdom? The same Grave that covers thy body shall bury all that, (the wisdom of thy flesh I mean) all thy thoughts shall perish, and goodly plots come to nothing. Indeed if a Christian, thy thoughts as such shall ascend with thee, not one holily breathing of thy soul lost. Is it thy blood and birth? who ever thou art, thou art base-born till born again, the same blood runs in thy veins with the beggar in the street, *Act. 17. 26.* All Nations there we find made of the same blood: in two things all are alike, we come in and go out of the world alike; as one is not made of finer earth, so not resolved into purer dust.

Use 2. Secondly, Is man Flesh: trust not in man; *Cursed be he that makes flesh his arm.* Not the mighty man; robes may hide and garnish, they cannot change Flesh, *Psal. 146. Put not your trust in Princes*; alas, they cannot keep their Crowns on their own heads, their heads on their own shoulders, and lookest thou for that which they cannot give themselves? Not in wise men, whose designs recoil oft upon themselves, that they cannot perform their enterprise. — *Amphora capis insitui currentiora, cur uicem exit.* Mans carnal wisdom intends one thing, but Gods turns the wheel, and brings forth another. Trust not in holy men, they have flesh, and so their judgment not infallible, yea, their way sometimes doubtful. His mistake may lead thee aside, and though he returns thou mayest go on and perish. Trust not in any man, in all men, no not in thy self, thou art flesh. *He is a fool (saith the Wise man) that trusts his heart.* Not in the best thou art or doest, the garment of thy righteousness

ousness is spotted with the Flesh; all is counted by Saint Paul, *Confidence in the Flesh*, besides our rejoicing in Christ, *Phil. 3. 3.*

Use 3. Thirdly, Fear not man, he is but flesh. This was Davids resolve, *Psal. 56. 4. I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* Thou need'st not, thou ought'st not to fear. Thou need'st not. What, not such a great man, not such a number of men, who have the keys of all the Prisons at their girdle, who can kill or save alive? no, not these; only look they be thy enemies for righteousness sake. Take heed thou mak'st it not the least child thine enemy, by offering wrong to him, God will right the wicked even upon the Saint. If he offends, he shall find no shelter under Gods wing for his sin. This made Jerome complain, that the Christians sin made the arms of those barbarous Nations which invaded *Christendom* victorious: *Nostri peccatis fortes sunt barbari.* But if mans wrath find thee in Gods way, and his fury take fire at thy holiness, thou need'st not fear though thy life be the prey he hunts for. Flesh can only wound flesh, he may kill thee, but not hurt thee. Why shouldst thou fear to be stript of that which thou hast resigned already to Christ? 'tis the first lesson thou learnest, if a Christian, to deny thy self, take up thy Cross, and follow thy Master, so that the enemy comes too late; thou hast no life to lose, because thou hast given it already to Christ, nor can man take away that without Gods leave; all thou hast is ensured; and though God hath not promised thee immunity from suffering in this kind, yet he hath undertaken to bear the loss, yea, to pay thee a hundred fold, and thou shalt not stay for it till another world. Again, thou ought'st not to fear flesh. Our Saviour, *Matth. 10.* thrice in the compass of six verses, commands us not to fear man; if thy heart quails at him, how wilt thou behave thy self in the List against Satan, whose little finger is heavier than mans loyns? The Romans had *armapalustris*, weapons rebated or cudgels, which they were tried at before they came to the sharp. If thou canst not bear a bruise in thy flesh from mans cudgel and blunt weapon, what wilt thou do when thou shalt have Satans sword in thy side? God counts himself reproached when his children fear a sorry man; Therefore we are bid, sanctifie the Lord, and not to fear their fear. Now if thou wouldest not fear man who is but flesh, Labour

First to mortifie thy own flesh; flesh only fears flesh: When the soul degenerates into carnal desires and delights, no wonder he falls into carnal fears. Have a care, Christian, thou bringest not thy self into bondage: perhaps thy heart feeds on the applause of man, this will make thee afraid to be evil spoken of, as those who shuffled with Christ, *Joh. 12. 42.* owning him in private, when they durst not confess him openly, for they loved the praise of men. David saith, *The mouth of the wicked is an open Sepulchre*; and in this grave hath many a Saints name been buried. But if this fleshly desire were mortified, thou wouldest not pass to be judged by man, and so of all carnal affections. Some meat you observe is aguish; if thou settest thy heart on any thing that is carnal, wife, child, estate, &c. these will incline thee to a base fear of man, who may be Gods

messenger to afflict thee in these.

Secondly, Set faith against flesh. Faith fixeth the heart, and a fixed heart is not readily afraid. Physicians tells us, we are never so subject to receive infection as when the spirits are low, and therefore the Antidotes they give are all cordials. When the spirit is low through unbelief, every threatening from man makes sad impression. Let thy faith but take a deep draught of the Promises, and thy courage will rise.

Fourthly, comfort thy self, Christian, with this, that as thou art flesh, so thy heavenly Father knows it, and considers thee for it.

First, In point of affliction, *Psal. 103. 14. He knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are but dust.* Not like some unskill'd Empirick, who hath but one receipt for all, strong or weak, young or old, but as a wise Physician considers his Patient, and then writes his bill: men and Devils are but Gods Apothecaries, they make not our Physick, but give what God prescribes. Balaam loved Balacks Fee well enough, but could not go an hairs breadth beyond Gods Commission. Indeed God is not so choice with the wicked, *Isa. 27. 7. Hath he smitten him as he smote those that smote him?* In a Saints cup the poison of the affliction is corrected, not so in the wicked; and therefore what is medicine to the one, is ruine to the other.

Secondly, in duty; he knows you are but flesh, and therefore pities and accepts thy weak service, yea, he makes Apologies for thee, *The spirit is willing, faith Christ, but the flesh is weak.*

Thirdly, in temptations he considers thou art flesh, and proportions the temptation to so weak a nature: 'tis called *πειρασμός ἀνθρώπου*, such a temptation as is common to man, a moderate temptation (as in the margin) fitted for so frail a creature. When ever the Christian begins to faint under the weight of it, God makes as much haste to his succour, as a tender Mother would to her swooning child; therefore he is said to be nigh to revive such, lest their spirits should fail.

SECT. III.

The second thing follows; The conjuncture of the Saints enemies: we have not to do with naked man, but with man led on by Satan: not with flesh and blood, but Principalties and Powers acting in them. There are two sorts of men the Christian wrestles with, good men and bad; Satan strikes in with both.

First, the Christian wrestles with good men. Many a sharp conflict there hath been betwixt Saint and Saint, scuffling in the dark through misunderstanding of the truth, and each other: *Abraham* and *Lot* at strife. *Aaron* and *Miriam* jilted with *Moses* for the wall, till God interposed and ended the quarrel by his immediate stroke on *Miriam*. The Apostles even in the presence of their Master were at high words, contesting who should be greatest. Now in these civil Wars among Saints, Satan is the great kindle-coal, though little seen, because like *Abah* he fights in a disguise, playing first on one side, and then on the other, aggravating every petty

*There is no love in the heart
in unity of the Spirit*

Petty injury, and thereupon provoking to wrath and revenge: Therefore the Apostle dehorting from anger, useth this argument, *Give no place to the Devil*, as if he had said, Fall not out among your selves, except you long for the Devils company, who is the true Souldier of Fortune (as the common phrase is) living by his Sword, and therefore hastes thither where there is any hope of war. Gregory compares the Saints in their sad differences to two Cocks, which Satan the Master of the Pit sets on fighting, in hope, when kill'd, to sup with them at night. Solomon saith, *Prov. 18.6. The mouth of the contentious man calls for strokes.* Indeed we by our mutual strifes give the Devil a staff to beat us with; he cannot well work without fire, and therefore blows up these coals of contention, which he useth as his forge, to heat our spirits into wrath, and then we are malleable, easily hammer'd as he pleaseth. Contention puts the soul into disorder, and *inter arma silent leges*. The Law of Grace acts not freely, when the spirit is in a commotion. Meek *Moses* provok'd speaks unadvisedly. Me thinks this (if nothing else will) should found a Retreat to our unhappy differences, that this *Joab* hath a hand in them; he sets this evil spirit betwixt Brethren, and what folly is it for us to bite and devour one another to make hell sport? we are prone to mistake our heat for Zeal, whereas commonly in strifes between Saints, it is a Fire-ship sent in by Satan to break their unity and order; wherein while they stand they are an Armado invincible, and Satan knows he hath no other way but this to shatter them. When the Christians Language, which should be one, begins to be confounded, they are then near scattering; 'tis time for God to part his Children, when they cannot live in peace together.

Secondly, The Christian wrestles with wicked men. *Because you are not of the world*, saith Christ, *the world hates you.* The Saints nature and life are Antipodes to the world; fire and water, Heaven and Hell may as soon be reconciled, as they with it. The heretick is his enemy for truths sake, the prophane for holiness, to both the Christian is an abomination, as the *Israelite* to the *Egyptian*; hence come wars, the fire of persecution never goes out in the hearts of the wicked, who say in their hearts as they once with their lips, *Christiani ad leones*. Now in all the Saints wars with the wicked, Satan is Commander in Chief, 'tis their Fathers works they do, his lusts they fulfil. The *Sabeans* plunder'd *Job*, but went on Satans errand. The Heretick broacheth corrupt Doctrine, perverts the Faith of many, but in that the Minister of Satan, *2 Cor. 11.15.* They have their call, their wiles and wages from him. Persecutors, their work ascribed to Hell; Is it a persecution of the tongue? 'tis Hell sets it on fire; Is it of the hand? still they are but

the Devils instruments, *Rev. 2.10. The Devil shall cast some of you into Prison.*

Use 1. First, Do you see any driving furiously against the truths or servants of Christ; O pity them as the most miserable wretches in the world, fear not their power, admire not their parts; they are men possessed of, and acted by the Devil, they are his drudges and slaughter slaves, as a Martyr call'd them. *Augustine* in his Epistle to *Lycimus*, one of excellent parts, but wicked, who once was his Scholar, speaks thus pathetically to him: O how I could weep and mourn over thee, to see such a sparkling wit prostituted to the Devils service! If thou hadst found a golden Chalice, thou wouldst have given it to the Church; but God hath given thee a golden head, parts and wit, and in this *propinas teipsum Diabolo*, thou drinkest thy self to the Devil. When you see men of power or parts, using them against God that gave them, weep over them, better they had lived and died, the one slaves, the other fools, than do the Devil such service with them.

Use 2. Secondly, O ye Saints, when reproached and persecuted, look further than man, spend not your wrath upon him; alas, they are but Instruments in the Devils hand: save your displeasure for Satan, who is thy chief enemy: these may be won to Christs side, and so become thy friends at last. Now and then we see some running away from the Devils Colours, and washing the wound with their tears, which they have made by their cruelty. 'Tis a notable passage in *Anselm*, who compares the Heretick and Persecutor to the Horse, and the Devil to the Rider. Now, saith he, in battel, when the enemy comes riding up, the valiant souldier, *Non irascitur equo, sed equiti, & quantum potest agit ut equitem percutiat, equum possideat; sic contra malos homines agendum, non contra illos, sed illum qui illos instigat, ut dum Diabolus vincitur, infelices quos ille possidet liberentur*: He is angry not with the horse, but horseman, he labours to kill the man, that he may possess the horse for his use: thus we do with the wicked, we are not to bend our wrath against them, but Satan that rides them, and spurs them on, labouring by prayer for them as Christ did on the Cross, to dismount the Devil, that so these miserable souls hackneyed by him may be delivered from him. 'Tis more honour to take one soul alive out of the Devils clutches, than to leave many slain upon the field. *Erasmus* saith of *Augustine*, that he begg'd the lives of those Hereticks at the hands of the Emperors Officers, who had been bloody persecutors of the Orthodox: *Cupiebat, saith he, amicus medicus superesse, quos arte sua sanaret*: Like a kind Physitian he desired their life, that if possible he might work a cure on them, and make them sound in the faith.

Man is against Satan
and the Devil the
rider

CHAR.

CHAP. II.

wherein is shewn what a Principality Satan hath, how he came to be such a Prince, and how we may know whether we be under him as our Prince, or not.

VERSE 12.

But against Principalities and Powers, &c.

SECT. I.

THe Apostle having shewn what the Saints enemies are not, *flesh and blood*, frail men, who cannot come but they are seen; who may be resisted with mans power, or escape by flight; now he describes them positively, *against Principalities and Powers, &c.* Some think the Apostle by these diverse names and titles, intends to set forth the distinct orders, whereby the Devils are subordinate one to another, so they make the Devil, *ver. 11.* to be the Head or Monarch, and these, *ver. 12.* so many inferior orders, as among men there are Princes, Dukes, Earls, &c. under an Emperour. That there is an order among the Devils cannot be denied. The Scripture speaks of a *Prince of Devils*, *Mat. 9.* and of *the Devil and his Angels*, who with him fell from their first station, called his Angels as its probably conceived, because one above the rest (as the head of the Faction) drew with him multitudes of others into his party, who with him sinned and fell. But that there should be so many distinct orders among them, as there are several Branches in this description, is not probable; too weak a notion to be the foundation of a Pulpit-discourse, therefore we shall take them as meant of the Devil collectively. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but Devils, who are Principalities, Powers, &c. and not distributively, to make Principalities one rank, Powers another; for some of these branches cannot be meant of distinct orders, but promiscuously of all as spiritual wickedness; it being not proper to one to be Spirits or wicked, but common to all.

First, Then, the Devil or whole pack of them are here described by their Government in this world, *Principalities.*

Secondly, By their strength and puissance, called *Powers.*

Thirdly, By their nature in their substance and degeneracy, *Spiritual wickednesses.*

Fourthly, In their Kingdom or proper Territories, *Rulers of the darkness of this world.*

Fifthly, By the ground of the war, *In heavenly places, or about heavenly things.*

First, Of the first, *Principalities*; *ἀρχαί*, the abstract for the concrete, that is, such as have a Prin-

cipality; So *Titus 3.1.* We are bid to be *subject to Principalities and Powers*, that is, Princes and Rulers, so the vulgar reads it. We wrestle against Princes; which some will have to express the eminency of their nature above mans, that as the state and spirit of Princes is more raised than others, great men have great spirits, as *Zeba and Zalmunna* to *Gideon*, asking who they were they slew at *Tabor*; *As thou art (say they) so were they, each one resembled the Children of a King*, that is, for Majesty and presence befitting a Princely race: so they think, the eminent nature of Angels here to be intended, who are as far above the highest Prince, as he above the basest Peasant; but because they are described by their nature in the fourth Branch, I shall subscribe to their judgment, who take this for their Principality of Government, which the Devil exerciseth in this lower world; and the Note shall be.

Doct. That Satan is a great Prince; Christ himself styles him *the Prince of the world*, *John 14.* Princes have their Thrones where they sit in state; Satan hath his, *Rev. 2. 13.* *Thou dwellest where Satan hath his Throne*; and that such a one as no earthly Prince may compare: few Kings are enthroned in the hearts of their Subjects; they rule their Bodies, and command their Purles; but how oft in a day are they pulled out of their Thrones by the wishes of their discontented Subjects! But Satan hath the heart of all his Subjects. Princes have their homage and peculiar honour done to them; Satan is served upon the Knee of his Subjects, the wicked are said to *worship the Devil*, *Rev. 13. 4.* No Prince expects such worship as he; no less than religious worship will serve him. *2 Chron. 11. 15.* *Jeroboam* there is said to ordain Priests for Devils, and therefore he is called not only the Prince, but the God of this world, because he hath the worship of a God given him. Princes, such as are absolute, have a Legislative power, nay, their own Will is their Law, as at this day in *Turkey*, where their Laws are writ in no other Tables, than in the proud *Sul-tans* breast; thus Satan gives Law to the poor sinner, who is bound, and must obey, though the Law be writ with his own blood, and the Creature hath nothing but damnation for fulfilling the Devils lust; 'tis called a *Law of sin*, *Rom. 8. 2.* because it comes with authority; Princes have their Ministers

sters of State, whom they employ for the safety and enlargement of their Territories: So Satan his, 2 Cor. 11. 15. who propagates his cursed designs; therefore we read of doctrine of Devils. Princes have their *Arcana imperii*, which none knows but a few Favourites in whom they confide; thus the Devil hath his Mysteries of iniquity, and depths of Satan we read of, which all his Subjects know not of, Rev. 2. 24. These are imparted to a few Favourites, such as *Elymas*, whom Paul calls full of all subtilty, and Child of the Devil; such, whose Consciences are so debauched, that they scruple not the most horrid sins; these are his white boys: I have read of a people in America, that love meat best when 'tis rotten and stinks. The Devil is of their diet, the more corrupt and rotten the Creature is in sin, the better he pleaseth his tooth; some are more the children of the Devil than others. Christ had his Beloved Disciple; and Satan those that lie in his very bosom, and know what is in his heart. In a word, Princes have their *Vasallia*, their Tribute and Custom; so Satan his. Indeed he doth not so much share with the sinner in all, but is owner of all he hath, so that the Devil is the Merchant, and the sinner but the Broker to trade for him, who at last puts all his gains into the Devils Purse: time, strength, parts, yea, Conscience and all are spent to keep him in his Throne.

SECT. II.

Quest. But how comes Satan to his Principality?

Ans. Not lawfully, though he can shew a fair claim. As,

First, He obtain'd it by Conquest: as he won his Crown; so he wears it by power and policy. But Conquest is a crackt Title. A thief is not the honestest, because able to force the Traveller to deliver his Purse; and a Thief on the Throne is no better than a private one on the Road, or Pirate in a Pinnacle, as he boldly told *Alexander*. Neither doth that prove good with process of time, which was evil at first: Satan indeed hath kept possession long, but a thief will be so as long as he keeps his stolen goods; he stole the heart of Adam from God at first, and doth no better to this day. Christs Conquest is good, because the ground of the War righteous, to recover what was his own, which Satan cannot say of the meanest Creature, 'Tis my own.

Secondly, Satan may lay claim to his Principality by Election; 'tis true, he came in by a wile, but now he is a Prince Elect, by the unanimous choice of corrupt nature; *Te are of your Father the Devil*, saith Christ, and his lusts ye will do. But this also hath a flaw in it; for man by law of Creation is Gods Subject, and cannot give away Gods Right; by sin he loseth his Right in God, as a Protector; but God loseth not his Right as a Sovereign. Sin disabled man to keep Gods Law, but it doth not enfranchise or disoblige him that he need not keep it.

Thirdly, Satan may claim a Deed of Gift from God himself, as he was bold to do to Christ him-

self upon this ground, perswading him to worship him as the Prince of the world, Luke 4. 5, 6. He shewed unto him all the Kingdoms of the world, saying, All this will I give thee, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. Where there was a truth, though he spake more than the truth, (as he cannot speak truth, but to gain credit to some Lie at the end of it.) God indeed hath delivered in a sense this world to him, but not in his sense, to do what he will with it, nor by any approbatory act given him a Patent to vouch him his Vice-Roy; nor Satan by the Grace of God, but by the permission of God, Prince of the world.

Quest. But why doth God permit this Apostate Creature to exercise such a Principality over the world?

Ans. First, As a righteous act of vengeance on man, for revolting from the sweet Government of his rightful Lord and Maker; 'Tis the way that God punisheth rebellion: *Because ye would not serve me with gladness in the abundance of all things, therefore ye shall serve your enemies in hunger, &c.* Satan is a King given in Gods wrath. Chams Curse is mans punishment, a *Servant of Servants*. The Devil is Gods slave, man the Devils. Sin hath set the Devil on the Creatures back, and now he huries him without mercy (as he did the Swine) till he be choak'd with flames, if mercy interpose not.

Secondly, God permits this his Principality, in order to the glorifying of his Name in the recovery of his Elect from the power of this great Potentate. What a glorious Name will God have when he hath finished this War, wherein at first he found all possessed by this Enemy, and not a man of all the sons of Adam to offer himself as a Voluntier in this service, till made willing by the day of his Power? This, this will gain God a Name above every Name, not only of Creatures, but of those by which himself was known to his Creature. The workmanship of Heaven and Earth give him the Name of a Creator, Providence of Preserver, but this of Saviour, wherein he doth both the former, preserve his Creature, which else had been lost, and create a new Creature, I mean the Babe of Grace, which, through God, shall be able to beat the Devil out of the field, who was able to drive Adam (though created in his full stature) out of Paradise; and may not all the other works of God empty themselves as Rivers into the Sea, losing their Names, or rather swelling into one of Redemption? Had not Satan taken Gods Elect Prisoners, they would not have gone to Heaven with such acclamations of triumph. There are three expressions of a great joy in Scripture; the joy of a woman after her travel, the joy of Harvest, and the joy of him that divideth the spoil: The exultation of all these is wrought upon a sad ground; many a pain and tear it costs the travelling woman, many a fear the Husbandman, perils and wounds the Souldier, before they come at their joy, but at last are paid for all, the remembrance of their past sorrows feeding their present joys. Had Christ come and entred into affinity with our Nature, and returned peaceably to Heaven with his Spoule,

Spouse, finding no resistance; though this would have been admirable love, and that would have afforded true joy of marriage, yet this way of carrying his Saints to Heaven will greater the joy, as it adds to the nuptial song, the triumph of a Conqueror, who hath rescued his Bride out of the hands of Satan, as he was leading her to the chambers of Hell.

SECT. III.

Use 1. Is Satan such a Prince? try whose subject thou art. His Empire is large, only a few privileged, who are translated into the Kingdom of Gods dear Son; even in Christs own territories, (visible Church I mean) where his name is profest, and the Scepter of his Gospel held forth, there Satan hath his subjects. As Christ had his Saints in Nero's Court; so the Devil his servants in the outward Court of his visible Church. Thou must therefore have something more to exempt thee from this Government, than living within the pale, and giving an outward conformity to the Ordinances of Christ; Satan will yield to this, and be no loser: As a King lets his Merchants trade to, yea, live in a forreign Kingdom, and while they are there learn the language, and observe the Customs of the place; this breaks not their allegiance: nor all that thy loyalty to Satan. When a Statute was made in Queen Elizabeths Reign, that all should come to Church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the Popes pleasure; he return'd them this answer, (as 'tis said) *Bid the Catholics in England give me their heart, and let the Queen take the rest.* His subject thou art whom thou crownest in thy heart, and not whom thou flatterest with thy lips.

But to bring the trial to an issue, know thou belongest to one of these, and but to one, Christ and Satan divide the whole world; Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no Superiour, and therefore hold in with both thou canst not. Now if thou sayest Christ be thy Prince, answer to these interrogatories.

First, How came he into the Throne? Satan had once the quiet possession of thy heart: thou wast by birth as the rest of thy neighbours, Satans vassal, yea, hast oft voucht him in the course of thy life to be thy Leige Lord; how then comes this great change? Satan surely would not of his own accord resign his Crown and Scepter to Christ; and for thy self thou wert neither willing to renounce, nor able to resist his Power: this then must only be the fruits of Christ victorious Arms, whom God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31. Speak therefore, hath Christ come to thee, as once Abraham to Lot, when prisoner to Kederlaomer, rescuing thee out of Satans hands, as he was leading thee in chains of lust to Hell? Didst thou ever hear a voice from Heaven in the Ministry of the Word calling out to thee, as once to Saul, so as to lay thee at Gods foot, and make thee face about for Heaven, or strike thee blind in thine own apprehension, who before hadst a good opinion of thy state, to tame and weaken thee; so as now thou art willing to be led by the hand of a child after Christ? Did e-

ver Christ come to thee, as the Angel to Peter in Prison, rowing thee up, and not only causing the chains of darkness and stupidity to fall off thy mind and conscience, but make thee obedient also, that the iron grate of thy will hath opened to Christ before he left thee? then thou hast something to say for thy freedom. But if in all this I be a Barbarian, and the language I speak be strange, thou knowest no such work to have passed upon thy spirit, then thou art yet in thy old prison; can there be a change of Government in a Nation by a Conquerour that invades it, and his subjects not hear of this? one King enthron'd, and another crowned in thy soul; and thou hear no scuffle all this while? The regenerating Spirit is compared to the wind, John 3. 8. His first attempts on the soul may be so secret, that the creature knows not whence they come, or whither they tend; but before he hath done, the sound will be heard throughout the soul, so as it cannot but see a great change in it self, and say, I that was blind, now see; I that was as hard as ice, now relenting for sin, now my heart gives, I can melt and mourn for it. I that was well enough without a Christ, yea, did wonder what others law in him, to make such ado for him, now have changed my note with the Daughters of Jerusalem; and for what is your Beloved (as I scornfully have askt) I have learnt to ask where he is, that I might seek him with you. O soul! canst thou say 'tis thus with thee? thou mayest know who has been here, no less than Christ, who by his victorious spirit hath translated thee from Satans power into his own sweet Kingdom.

Secondly, whose law dost thou freely subject thy self unto? the laws of these Princes are as contrary as their natures; the one a law of sin, Rom. 8. 2. the other a law of holiness, Rom. 7. 12. and therefore if sin hath not so far bereaved thee of thy wits, as not to know sin from holiness, thou mayest except resolved to cheat thy own soul (soon be resolved: confess therefore and give glory to God, to which of these laws doth thy soul set its seal? When Satan sends out his Proclamation, and bids sinner go, set thy foot upon such a command of God, observe what is thy behaviour, dost thou yield thy self, as Paul phraseth it, Rom. 6. 16. *παριστάμεθα*, a metaphor from Princes servants or others, who are said *παριστάνειν* *αυτοῖς*, to present themselves before their Lord, as ready and at hand to do their pleasure: by which the Apostle elegantly describes the forwardness of the sinners heart to come to Satans foot, when knock or call: Now doth thy soul go out thus to meet thy lust, (as Aaron his brother) glad to see its face in an occasion? thou art not brought over to sin with much ado, but thou likest the command; *Transgress at Gilgal* (saith God) *this liketh you well*, Hos. 4. 5. As a Courtier, who doth not only obey, but thank his Prince that he'll employ him. Need'st thou be long in resolving whose thou art? did ever any question, whether those were Jeroboams subjects, who willingly followed his command? Hos. 5. 11. Alas, for thee, thou art under the power of Satan, tyed by a chain stronger than brass or iron: thou lovest thy lust. A Saint may be for a time under a force, and under sin,

sin, as the Apostle bemoans, and therefore glad when deliverance comes, but thou sellest thy self to work iniquity. If Christ should come to take thee from thy lusts, thou wouldest whine after them, as *Micah* after his gods.

Thirdly, To whom goest thou for protection? as it belongs to the Prince to protect his subjects, so Princes expect their subjects should trust them with their safety; the very *Bramble* bids, *Judg. 9. 15. If in truth ye anoint me King, then put your trust under my shadow.* Now who hath thy confidence? Darest thou trust God with thy soul, and the affairs of it in well-doing? Good subjects follow their calling, commit State-matters to the wisdom of their Prince and his Council; when wronged, they appeal to their Prince in his Laws for right; and when they do offend their Prince, they submit to the penalty of the Law; and bear his displeasure patiently, till humbling themselves they recover his favour, and do not in a discontent fall to open rebellion. Thus a gracious soul follows his Christian calling, committing himself to God as a faithful Creator, to be ordered by his wise Providence. If he meets with violence from any, he scorneth to beg aid of the Devil to help him, or be his own judge to right himself: No, he acquiesceth in the counsel and comfort the Word of God gives him. If himself offends, and so comes under the lash of Gods correcting hand, he doth not then take up rebellious arms against God, and refuse to receive correction, but saith, *Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sin;* whereas a naughty heart dares not venture his estate, life, credit, or any thing he hath with God in well-doing, he thinks he shall be undone presently, if he sits still under the shadow of Gods promise for protection; and therefore he runs from God as from under an old house that would fall on his head, and lays the weight of his confidence in wicked policy, making lies his refuge; like *Israel*, he trusts in perverseness. When God tells him, *In returning and rest he shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be his strength:* he hath not faith to take Gods word for his security in ways of obedience. And when God comes to afflict him for any disloyal carriage, instead of accepting the punishment for his sin, and so to own him for his Sovereign Lord, that may righteously punish the faults of his disobedient subjects, his heart is filled with rage against God, and instead of waiting quietly and humbly (like a good subject) till God upon his repentance receives him into his favour, his wretched heart (presenting God as an enemy to him) will not suffer any such gracious or amiable thought of God to dwell in his bosome, but bids him look for no good at his hand. *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer?* whereas a gracious heart is most encouraged to wait from this very consideration that drives the other away; Because 'tis the Lord afflicts, *Micah 7. 6.*

Fourthly, Whom dost thou sympathize with? he is thy Prince, whose victories and losses thou layest to heart, whether in thy own bosome, or abroad in the world. What saith thy soul, when God healeth up thy way, and keeps thee from

that sin which Satan hath been soliciting for? If on Christs side thou wilt rejoyce when thou art delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction; as *David* said of *Abigail*, so wilt thou here, Blessed be the Ordinance, blessed be the Providence, which kept me from sinning against my God; but if otherwise, thou wilt harbour a secret grudge against the Word which stood in the way, and be discontented thy design took not. A naughty heart (like *Amnon*) pines whilest his lust hath vent. Again, what musick do the achievements of Christ in the world make in thy ear? when thou hearest the Gospel thrives, the blind see, the lame walk, the poor Gospellized, doth thy spirit rejoyce in that hour? If a Saint, thou wilt, as God is thy Father, rejoyce thou hast more brethren born, as he is thy Prince, that the multitude of his subjects encrease; so when thou seest the plot of Christs enemies discovered, powers defeated, canst thou go forth with the Saints to meet King Jesus, and ring him out of the field with praises? or do thy bells ring backward, and such news make thee haste, like *Haman*, mourning to thine House, there to empty thy spirit, swoln with rancour against his Saints and truth? or if thy policy can master thy passion so far, as to make fair weather in thy countenance, and suffer thee to join with the people of God in their acclamations of joy, yet then art thou a close murtherer within, and likest the work no better than *Haman* his office, in holding *Mordecai*'s stirrop, who had rather have held the Ladder: this speaks thee a certain enemy to Christ, how handsomely soever thou mayest carry it before men.

Secondly, Bless God, O ye Saints, who upon the former tryal can say, You are translated into the Kingdom of Christ, and so delivered from the tyranny of this Usurper: There are few but have some one gaudy day in a year, which they solemnize, some keep their birth-day, others their Marriage; some their manumission from a cruel service, others their deliverance from some eminent danger: Here is a mercy where all these meet. You may call it as *Adam* did his wife, *Chavah*, the mother of all the living; every mercy riseth up and calls this blessed; this is thy birth day, thou wert before, but beganest to live when Christ began to live in thee. The Father of the Prodigal dated his sons life from his return, *This my son was dead and is alive.* It is thy marriage-day, *I have married you to one husband, even Christ Jesus*, saith *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. Perhaps thou hast enjoyed this thy husbands sweet company many a day, and had a numerous off-spring of joys and comforts by thy fellowship with him, the thought of which cannot but endure him to thee, and make the day of thy espousals delightful to thy memory: 'Tis thy manumission, then were the Indentures cancelled, wherein thou wert bound to sin and Satan: when the Son made thee free, thou becamest free indeed: Thou canst not say thou wast born free, for thy Father was a slave, nor that thou boughtest thy freedom with a sum, *By grace ye are saved.* Heaven is settled on thee in the promise, and thou not at charge so much as for the writings drawing. All is done at Christ his cost, with whom God indented, and

to whom he gave the promise of eternal life before the world began, as a free estate to settle upon every believing soul in the day they should come to Christ, and receive him for their Prince and Saviour; so that from the hour thou didst come under Christs shadow, all the sweet fruit that grows on the tree of Life is thine; with Christ, all that both worlds have falls to thee; *All is yours*, because *you are Christs*. O Christian, look upon thy self now, and blest thy God to see what a change there is made in thy state, since that black and dismal time, when thou wert slave to the Prince of darkness; how couldst thou like thy old Scullions work again? or think of returning to thy house of bondage? now thou knowest the privileges of Christs Kingdom. Great Princes, who from baseness and beggary have ascended to Kingdoms and Empires (to add to the joy of their present honour) have delighted to speak often of their base birth, to go and see the mean Cottages where they were first entertained, and had their birth and breeding, and the like. And 'tis not unuseful for the Christian to look in at the Grate, to see the smoaky hole where once he lay, to view the Chains wherewith he was laden, and so to compare Christs Court and the Devils Prison; the felicity of the one, and the horror of the other together. But when we do our best to affect our hearts with this mercy, by all the enhancing aggravations we can find out; alas! how little a portion of it shall we know here? this is a *minimum excellens*, which cannot be fully seen, unless it be by a glorified eye; how can it be fully known by us, where it cannot be fully enjoyed? Thou art translated into the Kingdom of Christ, but thou art a great way from his Court. That is kept in Heaven, and that the Christian knows but as we far Countries that we never saw, only by a Map, or some Rarities that are sent us as a taste of what grows there in abundance.

Use 3. Thirdly, this (Christian) calls for thy Loyalty and faithful service to Christ, who hath saved thee from Satans bondage. Say, O ye Saints, to Christ, as they to *Gideon*, Come thou and rule over us, for thou hast delivered us from the hand, not of *Midian*, but of *Satan*. Who so able to defend thee from his wrath, as he who broke his power? Who like to rule thee so tenderly, as he that could not brook anothers tyranny over thee? In a word, who hath right to thee besides him, who ventur'd his life to redeem thee? *That being delivered from all thine enemies, thou mayest serve him without fear in holiness all the days of thy life*. And were it not pity that Christ should take all this pains to lift up thy head from Satans house of bondage, and give thee a place among those in his own house, who are admitted to minister unto him, (which is the highest honour the nature of men or Angels is capable of) and that thou shouldst after all this be found to have a hand in any treasonable practice against thy dear Saviour? Surely Christ may think he hath deserved better at your hands, if at none besides. Where shall a Prince safely dwell, if not in the midst of his own Courtiers; and those such who were all taken from Chains and Prisons to be thus preferred, the more to oblige them in his

service? Let Devils and Devilish men do their own work, but let not thy hand (O Christian) be upon thy dear Saviour. But this is too little, to bid thee not play the Traytor. If thou hast any loyal blood running in thy veins, thy own heart will smite thee when thou rendest the least skirt of his holy Law; thou canst as well carry burning coals in thy bosom, as hide any treason there against thy dear Sovereign. No, 'tis some noble enterprise I would have thee think upon, how thou mayst advance the Name of Christ higher in thy heart, and world too, as much as in thee lies. O how kindly did God take it, that *David*, (when peaceably set in his Throne) was casting about, not how he might entertain himself with those pleasures which usually corrupt and debauch the Court of Princes in times of peace, but how he might shew zeal for God, in building a House for his worship, that had rear'd a Throne for him, *2 Sam. 7*. And is there nothing (Christian) thou canst think on, wherein thou mayest eminently be instrumental for God in thy generation? He is not a good Subject that is all for what he can get of his Prince, but never thinks what service he may do for him. Nor he the true Christian, whose thoughts dwell more on his own happiness than the honour of his God. If Subjects might chuse what life stands best for their own enjoyment, all would desire to live at Court with their Prince; but because the Princes honour is more to be valued than this, therefore noble spirits (to do their Prince service) can deny themselves the delicacies of a Court, to jeopard their lives in the field, and thank their Prince too for the honour of their employment. Blessed *Paul* upon these terms was willing to have his day of Coronation in Glory protracted, and he to stay as Companion with his Brethren in tribulation here, for the furtherance of the Gospel. This indeed makes it *opera pretium vivere*, worth the while to live, that we have by it a fair opportunity (if hearts to husband it) in which we may give a proof of our real gratitude, to our God, for his redeeming Love in rescuing us out of the power of the Prince of darkness, and translating us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. And therefore (Christian) lose no time, but what thou meanest to do for God, do it quickly. Art thou a Magistrate? now it will be soon seen on whose side thou art: If indeed thou hast renounced allegiance to Satan, and taken Christ for thy Prince, declare thy self an enemy to all that bear the name of Satan, and march under his Colours. Study well thy Commission, and when thou understandest the duty of thy place, fall to work zealously for God. Thou hast thy Princes sword put into thy hand, be sure thou use it, and take heed how thou usest it; that when called to deliver it up, and thy account also, it may not be found rusty in the sheath through sloth and cowardise, besmeared with the blood of violence, nor bent and gapt with partiality and injustice. Art thou a Minister of the Gospel? thy employment is high, an Ambassador, and that not from some petty Prince, but the great God to his rebellious Subjects; a Calling so honourable, that the Son of God disdained not to come in extraordinary from Heaven to perform it, call'd therefore

the *Messenger of the Covenant*; yea, he had to this day stay'd on earth in person about it, had he not been call'd to reside as our *Ambassador* and *Advocate* in Heaven with the Father: and therefore in his bodily absence he hath entrusted thee and a few more to carry on the Treaty with sinners, which when on earth himself began. And what can you do more acceptable to him, than to be faithful in it, as a business on which he hath set his heart so much? As ever you would see his sweet face with joy (you that are his *Ambassadors*) attend to your work, and labour to bring this Treaty of Peace to a blessed issue between God and those you art sent to. And then if sinners will not come off, and seal the Articles of the Gospel, you shall (as *Abraham* said to his Servant) be clear of your oath. Though *Israel* be not gathered, yet you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. And let not the private Christian say, he is a dry tree, and can do nothing for Christ his Prince, because he may not bear the Magistrates fruit or Ministers. Though thou hast not a Commission to punish the sins of others with the Sword of Justice, yet thou maist shew thy zeal in mortifying thy own with the Sword of the Spirit, and mourn for theirs also: though thou maist not condemn them on the Bench, yet thou maist, yea, oughtest, by the power of a holy life, to convince and judge them; such a Judge *La* was to the *Sodomites*. Though thou art not sent to preach and baptize, yet thou maist be wonderful helpful to them who are. The Christians prayers whet Ma-

gistrates and Ministers sword also. O pray, Christian, and pray again, that Christs Territories may be enlarged; never go to hear the word, but pray, *Thy Kingdom come*. Loving Princes take great content in the acclamations and good wilbes of their Subjects as they pass by; a *Vivat Rex*, Long live the King, coming from a loyal breath, though poor, is more worth than a Subsidy from those, who deny their hearts while they part with their money. Thou servest a Prince (Christian) who knows what all his Subjects think of him, and he counts it his honour not to have a multitude feignedly submit to him, but to have a people that love him, and cordially like his Government, who if they were to chuse their King, and make their own Laws they should live under every day, would desire no other than himself, nor any other Laws than what they have already from his mouth. It was no doubt great content to *David*, that he had the hearts of his people so, as *whatever the King did pleased them all*, 2 Sam. 3. 26. And surely God took it as well, that what he did pleased *David*; for indeed *David* was as content under the rule and dispose of God, as the people were under his, witness the calmness of his spirit in the greatest affliction that ever befell him, 2 Sam. 15. 26. *Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him*. Loyal soul! he had rather live in exile with the good will of God, than have his Throne, if God will not say 'tis good for him.

CHAP. IV.

Of the great power Satan hath, not only over the Elementary and Sensitive part of the world, but Intellectual also, the Souls of men.

SECT. I.

THis is the second Branch of the Description, wherein Satan is set forth by his might and power. This gives weight to the former; were he a Prince, and not able to raise a force that might dread the Saints, the swelling Name of a Prince were contemptible; but he hath power answerable to his dignity, which in five Particulars will appear.

First, In his Names; Secondly, His Nature; Thirdly, His Number; Fourthly, His Order and Unity; Lastly, The mighty works that are attributed to him.

First, For the first, He hath Names of great power, called the *strong man*, Luke 21. 21. so strong, that he keeps his house in peace in defiance of all the sons of *Adam*, none on earth being able to cope with this Giant: Christ must come from Heaven to destroy him and his works, or the field is lost. He is call'd the *roaring Lion*, which Beast commands the whole Forest; if he roars, all tremble; yea, in such a manner, as *Pliny* relates, that

he goes amongst them, and they stand exanimated while he chuseth his prey without resistance: Such a Lion is Satan, who leads sinners captive at his will, 2 Tim. 3. 26. *He takes them alive*, as the word is, as the Fowler the Bird, which with a little scrap is enticed into the Net; or as the Conqueror his cowardly enemy, who has no heart to fight, but yields without contest. Such Cowards the Devil finds sinners; he no sooner appears in a motion, but they yield; They are but a very few noble spirits, and those are the Children of the most High God, who dare valiantly oppose him, and in striving against sin, resist to blood. He is called the *great red Dragon*, who with his Tail, wicked men, his Instruments, sweeps down the third part of the stars of Heaven. *The Prince of the power of the Air*, because as a Prince can muster his Subjects, and draw them into the field for his service, so the Devil can raise the *posse Caeli aerii*. In a word, he is call'd the *God of this world*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. because sinners give him a God-like worship, fear him as the Saints do God himself.

Secondly, The Devils nature shews his power 'tis Angelical. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels the

excel in strength, *Psal.* 103. 20. Strength is put for Angels, *Psal.* 78. 25. They did eat Angels food. Heb. the food of the mighty. In two things the power of Angelical nature will appear, in its superiority, and in its Spirituality.

First, Its Superiority, Angels are the top of the Creation; man himself made a little lower than the Angels. Now in the works of Creation, the Superior hath a power over the Inferior; the beasts over the grass and herb, man over the beasts, and Angels over man.

Secondly, the Spirituality of their nature. The weakness of man is from his flesh: his soul made for great enterprizes, but weighed down with a lump of flesh, is forced to rowe with a strength suitable to its weaker Partner; but now the Devils being Angels have no such incumbrance, no fumes from a fleshly part to cloud their understanding, which is clear and piercing; no clog at their heel to retard their motion, which for swiftness is set out by the wind and flame of fire. Yea, being spiritual they cannot be resisted with carnal force, fire and sword hurt not them. The Angel which appear'd to *Moses*, went up in the fire that consumed the sacrifice, though such hath been the dotage, and is at this day of superstitious ones; that they think to charm the Devil with their carnal exorcisms, hence the Romish Reliques, Crofs, holy water; yea, and among the Jews themselves in corrupter times, who thought by their Phylacteries and Circumcision, to scare away the Devil, which made some of them expound that, *Can.* 3. 8. of Circumcision, Every man hath his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night: By sword on the thigh, they expound Circumcision, which they will vainly have given as a charm against evil spirits that affright them in the night. But alas, the Devil cares for none of those, no, not for an Ordinance of God, when by fleshly confidence we make it a spell: he hath been often bound with these fetters and chains, (as is said of him in the Gospel) and the chains have been plucked asunder by him, neither could any man thus tame him. He esteems, as *Job* saith of the *Leviathan*, *Iron as straw, and Brass as rotten wood.* It must be a stronger than the strong man must bind him, and none stronger but God the Father of spirits. The Devil lost indeed by his fall much of his power, in relation to that holy and happy estate in which he was created, but not his natural abilities, he is an Angel still, and hath an Angels power.

Thirdly, the number of Devils adds to their power. What lighter than the sand? yet number makes it weighty. What creature less than lice? yet what Plague greater to the Egyptians? how formidable then must Devils be, who are both for nature so mighty, and for number such a multitude? there are Devils enough to beleague the whole world; not a place under Heaven where Satan hath not his Troops; not a person without some of these cursed spirits haunting and watching him wherever he goes; yea, for some special service he can send a Legion to keep a garrison in one single person, as *Mark* 5. and if so many can be spared to attend one, what a number would the Master

Roll of Satans whole Army amount if known? and now tell me, if we are not like to find our march difficult to Heaven, (if ever we mean to go thither) that are to pass through the very quarters of this multitude, who are scattered over the face of all the earth. When Armies are disbanded, and the Roads full of debauched Souldiers, wandering up and down, it's dangerous travelling: we hear then of murders and robberies from all quarters: These powers of Hell are that party of Angels, who for their mutiny and disobedience were cashier'd Heaven, and thrust out of that glorious Hoast; and ever since they have stragled here below, endeavouring to do mischief to the children of men, especially travelling in Heavens road.

Fourthly, their unity and order makes their number formidable. We cannot say there is love among them, that heavenly fire cannot live in the Devils bosome, yet there is unity and order as to this, they are all agreed in their design against God and man: so their unity and consent is knit together by the ligaments, not of love, but of hatred and policy, Hatred against God and his Children, which they are filled with, and policy, which tells them, that if they agree not in their design, their Kingdom cannot stand. And how true they are to this wicked brother-hood, our Saviour gives a fair testimony, when he saith, *Satan fights not against Satan.* Did you ever hear of any mutiny in the Devils Army? or that any of those Apostate Angels did freely yield up one soul to Christ? They are many, and yet but one spirit of wickedness among them all. *My name*, said the Devils, (not our name,) *is Legion.* The Devil is call'd the *Leviathan*, *Isa.* 27. 1. *The Lord with his strong Sword shall punish Leviathan*, from their cleaving together of iron compact or joined together, used for the Whale, *Job* 4. whose strength lies in his scales, which are so knit, that he is, as it were, covered with Armour. Thus these cursed spirits do accord in their machinations, and labour to bring their instruments into the same league with them, not contented with their bare obedience, but where they can obtain it, do require an express Oath of their servants, to be true to them, as in Witches.

Fifthly, the mighty works that are attributed to these evil spirits in Scripture declare their power, and these either respect the elementary, sensible, or intellectual part of the world. The Elementary, what dreadful effects this Prince of the power of the Air is able to produce on that, see in the Word; he cannot indeed make the least breath of air, drop of water, or spark of fire, but he can, if let loose, (as Reverend Master *Cory* saith on *Job* 1.) go to Gods Ware-house, and make use of these in such a sort, as no man can stand before him; he can hurle the Sea into such a commotion, that the depths shall boil like a Pot, and disturb the Air into storms and tempests, as if Heaven and Earth would meet. *Job*'s children were buried in the ruines of their house by a puff of his mouth, yea, he can go to Gods Magazine, (as the former Author saith) and let off the great Ordinance of Heaven, causing such dreadful thunder and lightning, as shall not only affright, but do real execution, and that in a more dreadful

way than in the ordinary course of Nature. If mans Art can so sublimiate Nature, as we see in the invention of Powder, that hath such a strange force, much more able is he to draw forth its power. Again, over the sensitive world his power is great, not only the beasts, as in the herd of Swine, hurried by him into the deep; but over the bodies of men also, as in *Job*, whose sore Boils were not the breakings out of a distempered Nature, but the print of Satans fangs on his flesh, doing that suddenly, which in Nature would have required more time to gather and ripen; and the demoniacks in the Gospel grievously vexed and tormented by him. But this the Devil counts small game, his great spite is at the Souls of men, which I call the intellectual World, his cruelty to the body is for the souls sake. As Christs pity to the bodies of men, (when on earth) healing their diseases, was in a subserviency to the good of their souls, bribing them with those mercies suitable to their carnal desires, that they might more willingly receive mercies for their souls, from that hand which was so kind to their bodies; as we give children something that pleaseth them, to periwade them to do something that pleaseth them not, go to School, learn their book: so the Devil who is cruel, as Christ is meek, and wisheth good neither to body nor soul, yet shews his cruelty to the body, but on a design against the soul, knowing well that the soul is soon discomposed by the perturbation of the other, the soul cannot but lightly hear, (and so have its peace and rest broken by the groans and complaints of the body) under whose very roof it dwells; and then it is not strange, if as for want of sleep the tongue talk idly, so the soul should break out into some sinful carriage, which is the bottom of the Devils plot on a Saint. And as for other poor silly souls, he gains little less than a God-like fear and dread of them by that power he puts forth (through Divine permission) in smiting their goods, beasts, and bodies, as among the Indians at this day. Yea there are many among our selves plainly shew what a throne Satan hath in their hearts upon this account, such who, as if there were not a God in *Israel*, go for help and cure to his Doctors, Wizards I mean. And truly had Satan no other way to work his will on the souls of men, but by this vantage he takes from the body, yet considering the degeneracy of mans state, how low his soul is sunk beneath its primitive extraction, how the body which was a lightsome house, is now become a prison to it, that which was its servant, is now become its Master; it is no wonder he is able to do so much. But besides this, he hath as a spirit a nearer way of access to the Soul, and as a superiour spirit, yet more over man a lower creature. And above all, having got within the soul by mans fall, he hath now far more power than before; so that where he meets not resistance from God, he carries all before him: As in the wicked, whom he hath so at his devotion, that he is (in a sense) said to do that in them, which God doth in the Saints. God works effectually in them, *Gal. 2. 8. 1 Thes. 2. 13.* Satan worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, *Eph. 2. 2.* *ἐνεργῶν*, the same word

with the former places, he is in a manner efficacious with them, as the holy Spirit with the other. His delusions strong, *2 Thes. 2. 11.* They returned not *re infecta*. The Spirit enlightens, he blinds the minds of those that believe not, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* The Spirit fills the Saints, *Ephes. 5. 18.* Why hath Satan filled thy heart, saith Peter to Ananias, *Act. 5. 3.* The Spirit fills with knowledge, and the fruits of righteousness; Satan fills with envy and all unrighteousness. The holy Spirit fills with comfort; Satan the wicked with terrors: As in *Saul* vexed by an evil spirit; and *Judas*, into whom 'tis said he entered, and when he had satisfied his lust upon him, (as *Amnon* on *Tamar*) shuts the door of mercy upon him, and makes him that was even now Traitor to his Master, Hangman to himself. And though Saints be not the proper subjects of his power, yet they are the chief objects of his wrath; his foot stands on the wickeds back, but he wrestles with these, and when God steps aside, he is far above their match: He hath sent the strongest among them home, trembling and crying to their God, with the blood running about their consciences. He is mighty, both as a tempter to and for sin, knowing the estate of the Christian affairs so well, and able to throw his fire-balls so far into the inward senses, (whether they be of lust or horror) and to blow up these with such unwearied solicitations, that if they at first meet not with some suitable dispositions in the Christian, at which (as some loose corners of powder) they may take fire, (which is most ordinary) yet in time he may bring over the creature by the length of the siege, and continued volleys of such motions, to listen to a parley with them, if not a yielding to them. Thus many times he even wearies out the soul with importunity.

SECT. II.

Use 1. First, Let this (O man) make the plumes of thy pride fall, whoever thou art that gloriest in thy power; hadst thou more than thou or any of the sons of *Adam* ever had, yet what is all that to the power of these Angels? Is it the strength of thy body thou gloriest in? Alas, what is the strength of frail flesh, to the force of their spiritual nature? Thou art no more to these than a Child to a Giant, a Worm to a Man; who could tear up the mountains, and hurle the world into a confusion, if God would but suffer them. Is it the strength of thy parts above others? Dost thou not see what fools he makes of the wisest among men? winding them about as a Sophister would do an Idiot, make them believe light is dark, bitter is sweet, and sweet bitter; were not the strength of his parts admirable, could he make a rational Creature as a man is, so absurdly throw away his Scarlet, and embrace dung: I mean, part with God and the glorious happiness he hath in him, in hope to mend himself, by embracing sin? yet this he did when man had his best wits about him in Innocency. Is it the power of place and dignity got by warlike achievement? Grant thou wert able to subdue Nations, and give Laws to the whole world, yet even

even then without Grace from above thou wouldst be his slave. And he himself, for all this his power, is a cursed Spirit, the most miserable of all Gods Creatures, and the more, because he hath so much power to do mischief; had the Devil lost all his Angelical Abilities, when he fell, he had gained by his loss. Therefore tremble (O man) at any power thou hast, except thou usest it for God. Art strong in body? Who hath thy strength? God, or thy Luits? Some are strong to drink, strong to sin, *Thy hands shall therefore be stronger*, Isa. 28. 22. Hast thou power by thy place to do God and his Church service, but no heart to lay it out for them, but rather against them? thou and the Devil shall be tried at the same Bar; it seems thou meanest to go to Hell for something, thou wilt carry thy full lading thither. No greater Plague can befall a man than power without Grace. Such great ones in the world, while here, make a brave shew, like chief Commanders and Field-Officers at the head of their Regiments, the common Souldiers are poor creatures to them; but when the Army is beaten, and all taken prisoners, then they sling off their Scarf and Feather, and would be glad to pass for the meanest in the Army. Happy would Devils be, Princes and great Ones in the world be, if then they could appear in the habit of some poor Sneaks to receive their Sentence as such; but then their Titles, and Dignity, and Riches shall be read, not for their Honour, but further shame and damnation.

Use 2. Secondly, It shews the folly of those that think it is such an easie matter to get Heaven. If the Devil be so mighty, and Heavens way so full of them, then sure it will cost hot water before we display our Banners upon the walls of that new *Jerusalem*. Yet it is plain many think otherwise, by the provision they make for their March. If you should see a man walking forth without a Cloak, or with a very thin one, you will say, Surely he fears no foul Weather; or one riding a long journey alone, and without Arms, you will conclude he expects no Thieves on the Road. * All (if you ask them) will tell you they are on their way to Heaven, but how few care for the company of the Saints, as if they needed not their fellowship in their journey? Most go naked, without so much as any thing like Armour, have not enough to gain the name of Professors at large; others, it may be, will shew you some vain slighty hopes on the Mercy of God, without any Scripture-bottom for the same, and with these content themselves, which will like a rusty unsound Pistol, fly in their own face, when they come to use it; and is it any wrong to say these make nothing of getting Heaven? Surely these men (many of whom thrive so well in the world) never got their Estates with so little care as they think to get Heaven. Ask them why they follow their Trade so close, they will tell you, Estates are not got by sleeping, Families are not provided for with the hands in the pocket, they meet with many Rooks and Cheaters in their dealing, who, should they not look to themselves, would soon undo them: and are there none that thou needest fear will put the Cheat on thy soul, and bereave thee

of thy Crown of Glory if they can? Thou art blinder than the Prophets servant, if thou seest not more Devils encompassing thee than he saw men about *Samarit*. Thy worldly Trade they will not hinder, nay, may be, help thee to sinful tricks in that, to hinder thee in this: but if once thou resolvest to seek out for Christ and his Grace, they will oppose thee to thy face; they are under an oath, as *Pauls* enemies were, to take away the life of thy soul if they can; desperate Creatures themselves, who know their doom is irrecoverable, and sell their own lives they will as dear as they can. Now what folly is it to betray thy soul into their hands, when Christ stands by to be thy Convoy? Out of him thou art a lost Creature, thou canst not defend thy self alone against Satan, nor with Satan against God. Close with Christ, and thou art delivered from one of thy Enemies, and him the most formidable, God I mean; yea, he is become thy friend, who will stick close to thee in thy conflict with the other.

Use 3. Thirdly, To the Saints: be not ye dismayed at this report which the Scripture makes of Satans power. Let them fear him who fear not God. What are these mountains of power and pride before thee, O Christian, who servest a God that can make a Worm thresh a Mountain? The greatest hurt he can do thee, is by nourishing this false fear of him in thy bosom: It is observed (*Bernard* saith) of some Beasts in the Forest, *Plerumque superant leonem ferientem, quia non sustinent rugientem*: Though they are too hard for the Lion in fight, yet tremble when he roars. Thus the Christian, when he comes to the pinch indeed, is able through Christ to trample Satan under his feet; yet before the Conflict, stands trembling at the thought of him. Labour therefore to get a right understanding of Satans power, and then this Lion will not appear so fierce, as you paint him in your melancholy Fancy. Three Considerations will relieve you, when at any time you are beset with the fears of his power.

First, It is a derived power; he hath it not in himself, but by Patent from another, and that no other but God: *All powers are of him*, whether on Earth or in Hell. This truth subscribed in Faith, would first secure thee (Christian) that Satans power shall never hurt thee. Would thy Father give him a Sword to mischief thee his Child? *I have created the Smith* (saith God) *that bloweth the coals, I have created the waster to destroy*, and therefore assures them, *that no weapon formed against them shall prosper*, Isa. 54. 16, &c. If God provides his Enemies Arms, they shall (I warrant you) be such as will do them little service. When *Pilate* thought to scare Christ with what he could do towards the saving or taking away of his life, he replies, *that he could do nothing except it were given from above*, Joh. 19. 10. as if he had said, Do your worst, I know who seal'd your Commission.

Secondly, This considered, would meeken and quiet the soul, when troubled by Satan within, or his instruments without: 'Tis Satan busters, man persecutes me, but God who gives them both power. *The Lord* (saith *David*) *bids him curse*. *The Lord*

Lord (saith Job) hath given, and the Lord hath taken. This kept the Kings peace in both their bosoms. O Christian, look not on the Jaylor that whips thee, may be he is cruel; but read the Warrant, who wrote that, and at the bottom thou shalt find thy Fathers hand.

Secondly, Satans power is limited, and that two ways; he cannot do what he will, and he shall not do what he can.

First, He cannot do what he will. His desires are boundless, they walk not only to and fro here below, but in Heaven it self, where he is pulling down his once fellow Angels, knocking down the carved work of that glorious Temple, as with Axes and Hammers; yea, unthroning God, and setting himself in his place: this Fool saith in his heart, There is no God; but he cannot do this, nor many other things which his canker'd malice flurs him up to with; he is but a Creature, and so hath the length of his Tedder to which he is staked, and cannot exceed; and if God be safe, then thou also, for thy life is hid with Christ in God; *If I love (saith Christ) you shall love also.* You are engraven on the table of his heart; if he plucks one away, he must the other also. Again, as he cannot hurt the Being of God, so he cannot pry into the bosom of God. He knows not man, much less the thoughts of God. The Astrologers nor their Master could bring back *Nechadanezzars* Dream. As men have their Closets for their own privacy, where none can enter in but with their Key, so God keeps the heart as his with-drawing Room, shut to all besides himself, and therefore when he takes upon him to foretell Events, if God teach him not his Lesson, nor second causes help him, he is beside his Book; so to save his credit, delivers them dubiously, that his text may bear a gloss suitable to the effect whatever it is. And when he is bold to tell the state of a person, there is no weight to be laid on his judgment. Job was an Hypocrite in his mouth, but God proved him a Lier. Again, Thirdly, He cannot hinder those Purposes and Counsels of God he knows. He knew Christ was to come in the flesh, and did his worst, but could not hinder his Landing, though there were many Devices in his heart, yet the counsel of the Lord concerning him did stand, yea, was delivered by the Midwifery of Satans suggestion, and his Instruments executing his lust, as they thought, but fulfilling Gods Counsel against themselves. Fourthly, He cannot ravill thy Will, *Diabolus non est jussor vitiorum, sed incensor.* He cannot command thee to sin against thy will; he can *mentis agere*, make the soul go faster that is on its way, as the Wind carries the Tide with more swiftness, but he cannot turn the stream of the heart contrary to its own course and tendency.

Secondly, Satans power is so limited, that he shall not do what he can. God lets out so much of his wrath as shall praise him, and be as a stream to set his purpose of love to his Saints on work, and then lets down the Flood-gate by restraining the residue thereof: God ever takes him off before he can finish his work on a Saint. He can (if God suffers him) rob the Christian of much of his Joy, and disturb his peace by his cunning insinuation, but

he is under command; he stands like a Dog by the Table, while the Saints sit at this sweet Feast of Comfort, but dares not stir to roam off their Cheer, his Masters eye is on him. The want of this consideration loseth God his praise, and us our Comfort, God having lockt up our comfort in the performance of our duty. Did the Christian consider what Satans power is, and who damns it up, this would always be a Song of praise in his mouth. Hath Satan power to rob and burn, kill and slay, torment the body, distress the mind? whom may I thank that I am in any of these out of his hands? Doth Satan love me better than Job? or am I out of sight, or beside his Walk? Is his courage cool'd, or his wrath appeas'd, that I escape so well? no, none of these, his wrath is not against one, but all the Saints; his eye is on thee, and his arm can reach thee; his spirit is not cool'd, nor his stomach staid with those millions he hath devour'd, but keen as ever, yea, sharper, because now he sees God ready to take away, and the end of the world drawing on so fast. Tis thy God alone whom thou art beholden to for all this; his eye keepeth thee; when Satan finds the good man asleep, then he finds our good God awake: therefore thou are not consumed, because he changeth not. Did his eye slumber or wander one moment, there would need no other flood to drown thee, yea, the whole world, than what would come out of this Dragons mouth.

Thirdly, Satans power is ministerial, appointed by God for the service and benefit of the Saints. Tis true (as it's said of the proud *Affyrian*) *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; Isa. 10. 7.* but it is in his heart to destroy those he tempts: but no matter what he thinks. As *Luther* comforted himself, when told what had passed at the Diet at *Nuremberg* against the Protestants, that it was decreed *one way there, but otherwise in Heaven*; so for the Saints comfort, the thoughts which God thinks to them are peace, while Satans are ruine to their graces, and destruction to their souls; and his counsel shall stand in spite of the Devil. The very *Mistimus* which God makes, when he commits any of his Saints to the Devils prison, runs thus, *Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5. 5.* So that tempted Saints may say, we had perished if we had not perished to our own thinking. This *Leviathan* while he thinks to swallow them up, is but lent of God (as the Whale to *Jonah*) to waite them safe to land. Some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, *Dan. 11. 35.* This God intends when he lets his children fall into temptation, as we do with our linnen, the spots they get at our Feasts, are taken out by washing, rubbing, and laying them out to bleach. The Saints spots are most in peace, plenty, and prosperity, and they never recover their whiteness to such a degree, as when they come from under Satans scourging. We do too little not to fear Satan, we should comfort our selves with the usefulness and subsequecy of his temptations to our good. *All things are yours, who are Christs.* He that hath given

given life to be yours, hath given death also. He that hath given Heaven for your Inheritance, Paul and Cephas, his Ministers and Ordinances to help you thither, hath given the world with all the afflictions of it, yea, the Prince of it too, with all his wrath and power, in order to the same end. This indeed is love and wisdom in a Riddle, but you who have the Spirit of Christ can unfold it.

CHAP. V.

Of the Time when, the Place where, and the Subjects whom Satan rules.

Against the Rulers of the Darknes of this world.

These words contain the third Branch in the Description of our great Enemy the Devil; and they hold forth the proper Seat of his Empire, with a three-fold Boundary; he is not Lord over all, that is the incommunicable Title of God; but a Ruler of the darknes of this world, where the time, place, and subjects of his Empire are stinted.

1. The time when this Prince hath his rule, *In this world*, that is, now, not hereafter.
2. The place where he rules, *In this world*; that is, here below, not in heaven.
3. The subjects or persons whom he rules, not all in this lower world neither; and they are wrapt up in these words, *The darknes of this world*. First, of the first Boundary.

SECT. I.

1. The time when he rules, so this word [*world*] may be taken in the text for that little spot of time, which (like an inconsiderable Parenthesis) is clasp'd in on either side with vast eternity, call'd sometimes the *present world*, Tit. 2. 12. On this stage of time this mock-King acts the part of a Prince, but when Christ comes to take down this Scaffold at the end of this world, then he shall be degraded, his Crown taken off, his Sword broken over his head, and he hift off with scorn and shame; yea, of a Prince, become a close Prisoner in Hell: no more then shall he infect the Saints, no, nor rule the wicked; but he with them, and they with him, shall lie under the immediate execution of Gods wrath. For this very end Christ hath his Patent and Commission, which he will not give up, till he shall have put down all rule, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25. Then, and not till then, will he deliver up his Oeconomical Kingdom to his Father, when he shall have put down all rule; for he must reign till he have put all enemies under his feet. Satan is cast already, his Doom is past upon him, as Adams was upon his first sin, but full execution is stayed till the end of the world. The Devil knows it, it is an Article in his Creed, which made him trembling ask Christ why he came to torment him before his time.

Use 1. First, this brings ill news to the wicked. Your Prince cannot long sit in his Throne; sinners at present have a merry time of it, if it would hold;

they rejoyce, while Christs Disciples weep and mourn; they ruffle in their Silks, while the Saint goes in his Rags. Princes are not more careful to oblige their Courtiers with Pensions and Preferments, than the Devil is to gratifie his Followers. He hath his Rewards also; *All this will I give thee. Am not I able to promote thee*, saith Balak to Balaam? O 'tis strange (and yet not strange, considering the degeneracy of mans nature) to see how Satan carries sinners after him with this golden hook. Let him but present such a bait as Honour, Pelf, or Pleasure, and their hearts skip after it as a Dog would at a Crust; he makes them sin for a morsel of Bread: O the naughty heart of man loves the wages of unrighteousness (which the Devil promisseth) so dearly that it fears not the dreadful wages which the great God threatens. As sometimes you shall see a Spaniel so greedy of a Bone, that he'll leap into the very River for it, if you throw it thither, and by that time he comes with much ado thither, 'tis sunk, and he gets nothing but a mouthful of water for his pains: Thus sinners will after their desired Pleasures, Honours, and Profits, swimming through the very threatnings of the Word to them, and sometimes they lose even what they gaped for here. Thus God kept Balaam (as Balak told him) from honour, Numb. 24. 11. But however they speed here, they are sure to lose themselves everlastingly without repentance. They that are resolved they will have these things, are the men that fall into the Devils snare, and are led into those foolish and hurtful lusts which will drown them in destruction and perdition, 1 Tim. 6. 9. O poor sinners! were it not wisdom before you truck with the Devil, to enquire what Title he can give you to these goodly vanities? Will he settle them as a free estate upon you? Can he secure your Bargain, and keep you from suits of Law? or is he able to put two Lives into the purchase, that when you die you may not be left destitute in another world? Alas, poor wretches! you shall ere long see what a cheat he hath put on you, from whom you are like to have nought but *Caveat Emptor*, Let the Buyer look to that. Yea, this great Prince that is so brag, to tell what he will give you, most down himself; and a sad Prince must needs make a sad Court: O what howling will there then be of Satan and his Vassals together! O, but saith the sinner, the pleasures and honours Sin and Satan

Satan offer are present, and that which Christ promiseth we must stay for. This indeed is that which takes most. *Demas, faith Paul, forsook me, having loved this present world, 2 Tim. 4. 10.* 'Tis present indeed (sinners) for you cannot say it will be yours the next moment; your present felicity is going, and the Saints (though future) is coming never to go: and who for a gulp of pottage, and sensual enjoyments at present, would part with a reversion of such a Kingdom? except thou art of his mind, who thought he had nothing but what he had swallowed down his throat.

*Hac habeo qua edi, quaque exaurata libido
Hansu.*

Which *Cicero* could say, was more fit to be writ on an Oxes grave than a mans. Vile wretch, that thinkest 'tis not better to deal with God for time, than the Devil for ready pay. *Tertullian* wonders at the folly of the *Roman* ambition, who would endure all manner of hardship in field and fight, for no other thing but to obtain at last the honour to be Consul, which he calls *unius anni volaticum gaudium*; a joy that flies away at the years end. But O what a desperate madness is it for sinners then, not to endure a little hardship here, but entail on themselves the eternal wrath of God hereafter, for the short feast, and running banquet their lusts entertain them here withal, which often is not *gaudium unius hora*, a joy that lasts an hour.

Use 2. Secondly, Let this encourage thee, O Christian, in thy conflict with Satan; the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long. Let him tempt thee, and his wicked instruments trounce thee, 'tis but a little while, and thou shalt be rid of both their evil neighbourhoods. The cloud while it drops is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, and eternal Sun-shine of glory. Canst thou not watch with Christ one hour or two? keep the field a few days? If yield, thou art undone for ever; persevere but while the battle is over, and thine enemy shall never rally more, bid Faith look through the key-hole of the promise, and tell thee what it sees there laid up for him that overcomes; bid it listen and tell thee, whether it cannot hear the shouts of those crowned Saints, as of those that are dividing the spoil, and receiving the reward of all their services and sufferings here on earth: and dost thou stand on the other side afraid to wet thy foot with those sufferings and temptations, which like a little plash of water run between thee and glory?

SECT. II.

Secondly, The Devils Empire is confined to place as well as time; he is the ruler of this lower world, not of the heavenly. The highest the Devil can go is the air, called the Prince thereof, as being the utmost marches of his Empire, he hath nothing to do with the upper world. Heaven fears no Devil, and therefore its gates stand always open; never durst this Fiend look into that holy place since he was first expell'd, but rangeth to and fro here below as a vagabond creature, excommunicated the

presence of God, doing what mischief he can to Saints in their way to Heaven: But is not this matter of great joy, that Satan hath no power there where the Saints happiness lies? What hast thou (Christian) which thou needest value that is not there? Thy Christ is there, and if thou lovest him, thy heart also, which lives in the bosom of its beloved. Thy friends and kindred in Christ are there, or expected, with whom thou shalt have a merry meeting in thy Fathers house, notwithstanding the snare on *Tabor*, the plots of Satan which lie in the way. O friends, get a title to that Kingdom, and you are above the flight of this Kite. This made *Job* a happy man indeed, who when the Devil had plundered him to his skin, and worried him almost out of that too, could then vouch Christ in the face of Death and Devils to be his Redeemer, whom he should with those eyes, that now stood full with brinish tears, behold, and that for himself as his own portion. It is sad with him indeed, who is robbed of all he is worth at once; but this can never be said of a Saint. The Devil took away *Jobs* purse (as I may say) which put him into some straits, but he had a God in Heaven that put him into stock again. Some spending money thou hast at present in thy purse, in the activity of thy faith, the evidence of thy sonship, and comfort flowing from the same, enlargement in duty, and the like, which Satan may for a time disturb, yea, deprive thee of, but he cannot come to the rolls to blot thy name out of the book of life; he cannot null thy faith, make void thy relation, dry up thy comfort in the spring, though dam up the stream; nor hinder thee a happy issue of thy whole war with sin, though worst thee in a private skirmish; these all are kept in Heaven, among Gods own Crown-Jewels, who is said to keep us by his power through faith unto salvation.

SECT. III.

The third boundary of the Devils principality is in regard of his subjects, and they are described here to be the darkness of this world, that is, such who are in darkness. This word is used sometimes to express the desolate condition of a creature in some great distress, *Isa. 50. He that walks in darkness, and sees no light*: Sometimes to express the nature of all sin, *10 Ephes. 5. 1.* sin is called the work of darkness; sometimes the particular sin of ignorance; often set out by the darkness of the night, blindness of the eye; all these I conceive may be meant, but chiefly the latter: for though Satan makes a foul stir in the soul, that is, in the dark of sorrow, whether it be from outward crosses, or inward desertions; yet if the creature be not in the darkness of sin at the same time, though he may disturb his peace as an Enemy, yet cannot be said to rule as a Prince. Sin only sets Satan in the throne; so that I shall take the words in the two latter interpretations.

First, For the darkness of sin in general.

Secondly, For the darkness of ignorance in special; and the sense will be, That the Devils rule is over those that are in a state of sin and ignorance, not over those who are sinful or ignorant, so he would

would take hold of Saints as well as others; but over those who are in a state of sin, which is set out by the abstract, *Ruler of the darkness*, the more to express the fulness of the sin and ignorance that possesseth Satans slaves; and the Notes will be two.

First, Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan.

Secondly, Ignorance above other things enslaves a soul to Satan; and therefore all sins are set out by that which chiefly expresseth this, *viz.* darkness.

Doct. Every soul in a state of sin is under the rule of Satan; under which point these two things must be enquired.

First, The reason why sin is set out by darkness.

Secondly, How every one in such a state appears to be under the Devils rule. For the First.

First, sin may be called darkness, because the spring and common cause of sin in man is darkness. The external cause Satan, who is the great promoter of it, he is a cursed spirit held in chains of darkness. The internal is the blindness and darkness of the soul: we may say when any one sins, he doth he knows not what, as Christ said of his Murthurers. Did the creature know the true worth of the soul, (which he now sells for a song,) the glorious amiable nature of God and his holy ways, the matchless love of God in Christ, the poysonful nature of sin, and all these nor by a sudden beam darted into the window at a Sermon, and gone again, like a flash of lightning, but by an abiding light; this would spoil the Devils Market, and poor creatures would not readily take this toad into their bosoms; sin goes in a disguise, and so is welcome.

Secondly, it is darkness, because it brings darkness into the soul, and that naturally and judicially.

First, Naturally. There is a noxious quality in sin offensive to the understanding, which is to the soul what the eye and palate are to the body; it discerns of things, and distinguisheth true from false, as the eye white from black: It tryeth words as the mouth tasteth meats. Now as there are some things bad for the sight, and others bad for the palate vitiating it so, that it shall not know sweet from bitter; so here sin besets the creature, and makes it injudicious, that he who could see such a practice absurd and base in others before, when once he had drank of this enchanting cup himself, (as one that hath fordone his understanding) is mad of it himself, not able now to see the evil of it, or use his reason against it. Thus *Saul* before he had debauched his conscience, thinks the Witch worthy of death; but after he had trodden his conscience hard with other foul sins, goes to ask counsel of one himself.

Again, sin brings darkness judicially; such have been threatened, whose ear God hath been trying to open and instruct, and have run out of Gods School into the Devils, by *rebellling against light*, that they shall *die without knowledge*, *Job 36. 10. 12.* What should the candle burn waste, when the crea-

ture hath more mind to play than work?

Thirdly, Sin runs into darkness. Impostors bring in their *damnable Heresies privily*, like those who sell bad ware, loth to come to the Market, where the Standard tries all; but put it off in secret: so in mortal wickedness, sinners like beasts go out in the night for their prey, loth to be seen, afraid to come where they should be found out. Nothing more terrible to sinner than light of truth, *John 3. 19. Because their deeds are evil.* Felix was so nettled with what *Paul* spake, that he could not sit out the Sermon, but flings away in haste, and adjourns the hearing of *Paul* till a convenient season, but he never could find one. The Sun is not more troublesome in hot Countrys, than truth is to those who sit under the powerful preaching of it; and therefore as those seldom come abroad in the heat of the day, and when they must, have their devices over their heads to skreen them from the Sun, so sinners shun as much as may be the preaching of the Word; but if they must go to keep in with their relations, or for other carnal advantages, they, if possible, will keep off the power of truth, either by sleeping the Sermon away; or prating it away with any foolish imagination which Satan sends to bear them company and chat with them at such a time: or by chusing such a cool Preacher to sit under, whose toothless discourse shall rather flatter than trouble, rather tickle their fancy than prick their consciences; and then their fore eyes can look upon the light. *Florescentem amant veritatem qui non redarguentem*: they dare handle and look on the sword with a delight when in a rich scabbard, who would run away to see it drawn.

Fourthly, Sin is darkness for its uncomfortable-ness, and that in a threefold respect.

First, Darkness is uncomfortable, as it shuts out of all employment. What could the Egyptians do under the plague of darkness, but sit still? and this to an active spirit is trouble enough. Thus in a state of sin man is an unserviceable creature, he can do his God no service acceptably, spoils every thing he takes in hand, like one running up and down in a shop when windows shut, doth nothing right. It may be writ on the grave of every sinner, who lives and dyes in that state: Here lyes the man, that never did God an hours work in all his life.

Secondly, Darkness is uncomfortable in point of enjoyment; be there never such rare pictures in the room, if dark, who the better? A soul in a state of sin may possess much, but enjoys nothing: this is a fore evil, and little thought of. One thought of its state of enmity to God, would drop bitterness into every cup, all he hath smells of hell-fire; and a man at a rich feast would enjoy it sure but little, if he smelt fire, ready to burn his house and himself.

Thirdly, Darkness fills with terrors, fears in the night are most dreadful; a state of sin is a state of fear. Men that owe much, have no quiet, but when they are asleep, and not then neither, the cares and fears of the day sink so deep, as makes their rest troublesome and unquiet in the night. The wicked hath no peace, but when his conscience sleeps, and that sleeps but brokenly, awaking often with

with sick fits of terrour: when he hath most profperity, he is scared like a flock of Birds in a Corn-field at every Piece going off. He eats in fear, and drinks in fear; when afflicted, he expects worse behind; and knows not what this blood may spread to, and where it may lay him, whether in Hell or not he knows not, and therefore trembles, (as one in the dark) not knowing but his next step may be into the Pit.

Fifthly, Sin leads to utter darkness; utter darkness is darkness to the utmost. Sin in its full height, and wrath in its full heat together; both universal, both eternal. Here's some mixture, peace and trouble, pain and ease; sin and thoughts of repenting, sin and hopes of pardon; there the fire of wrath shall burn with slacking, and sin run parallel with torment: Hell-birds are no Changelings, their torment makes them sin, and their sin feeds their torment, both unquenchable, one being fuel to another.

2. Let us see how it appears, that such as are under a state of sin, are under the rule of Satan. Sinners are call'd the Children of the Devil, 1 John 3. 10. and who rules the Child but the Father? They are slaves; Who rules the slaves but the Master? They are the very Mansion-house of the Devil; where hath a man command, but in his own house? *I will go to my house*, Mat. 12. 44. As if the Devil had said, I have walkt among the Saints of God, to and fro, knocking at this door and that, and none will bid me welcome, I can find no rest; well, I know where I may be bold: He even go to my own house, and there I am sure to rule the Roste without controul; and *when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and garnished*; that is, all ready for his entertainment. Servants make the house trim and handsome against their Master come home, especially when he brings Guests with him; as here the Devil brings *seven more*. Look to the sinner, there is nothing he is or hath, but the Devil hath dominion over it: *He rules the whole man*, their minds blinding them. All the sinners apprehensions of things are shapen by Satan: he looks on sin with the Devils spectacles; he reads the word with the Devils Comment: he sees nothing in its native colours, but is under a continual delusion. The very wisdom of a wicked man is said to be *devilish*, James 3. 15. *Supposed*, or *Devil-like*, because taught by the Devil, and also such as the Devil's is, *wise only to do evil*. *He commands their Wills*, though not to force them, yet effectually to draw them. *His work* (saith Christ) *ye will do*. You are resolved on your way, the Devil hath got your hearts, and him you will obey: and therefore when Christ comes to recover his Throne, he finds the soul in an uproar, as *Ephesus* at *Pauls* Sermon, crying him down, and *Diana* up. We will not have this man reign over us; what is the Almighty that we should serve him? *He rules over all states* Members; they are call'd *Weapons of unrighteousness*; all at the Devils service; as all the Arms of a Kingdom, to defend the Prince against any that shall invade. The Head to plot, the Hand to act, the Feet swift to carry the Body up and down about his service; *He rules over all he hath*. Let God come in a poor Mem-

ber, and beseech him to lend him a penny, or bestow a morsel to refresh his craving bowels; and the covetous wretch his hand of Charity is withheld, that he cannot stretch it forth: but let Satan call, and his Purse lies open, and Heart also. *Nabal* that could not spare a few fragments for *David* and his Followers, this Churl could make a *Faust* like a Prince, to satisfie his own lust of Gluttony and Drunkenness. *He commands their time*; when God calls to duty, to pray, to hear, no time all the week to be spared for that; but if the sinner hears there is a merry meeting, a knot of good Fellows at the Ale-house, all is thrown aside to wait on his Lord and Master; Calling left at six and sevens, yea, Wife and Children crying, (may be starving) while the wretch is pouring out their very blood (in waisting their livelihood) at the foot of his Lust. The sinner is in the *bond of iniquity*; and being bound, he must obey. He is said to go after his lust, *as the fool to the Stocks*, Prov. 7. 22. The pinion'd Malefactor can as soon untie his own Arms and Legs, and so run from his Keeper, as he from his Lusts: *They are servants*, and their Members Instruments of sin: even as the Workman takes up his Ax, and it resists not; so doth Satan dispose of them, except God saith nay.

See here the deplored condition of every one in a state of sin. He is under the rule of Satan, and government of Hell. What tongue can utter, what heart can conceive the misery of this state! It was a dismal day which Christ foretold, *Marth. 24. When the abomination of desolation should be seen, standing in the Holy Place: then* (saith Christ) *in him that is in Judea flee into the mountains*. But what was that to this? they are but men, though abominable; these Devils. They did but stand in the material Temple, and defile and deface that; but these display their Banners in the souls of men, pollute that Throne, which is more glorious than the material Heaven it self, made for God alone to sit in. They exercised their cruelties at furthest on the bodies of men, killing and torturing them: here the precious souls of men are destroyed. When *David* would curse to purpose the enemies of God, he prays that *Satan may be at their right hand*. These strange sinners should no more tremble at this, who should they but see their Swine, or a Beast bewitch and possess of the Devil, run headlong into the Sea, would cry out as half undone: and is not one soul more worth than all these? What a plague is it to have Satan possess thy heart and spirit, hurrying thee in the fury of thy lusts to perdition? O poor man! what a sad change hast thou made? Thou who wouldst not sit under the meek and peaceable Government of God thy rightful Lord, art paid for thy rebellion against him, in the cruelty of this Tyrant, who writes all his Laws in the blood of his Subjects; and why will you sit any longer, (O sinners) under the shadow of this Bramble, from whom you can expect nothing but eternal fire, to come at last and devour you? Behold, Christ is in the Field, sent of God to recover his Right, and your Liberty. His royal Standard is pitch'd in the Gospel, and Proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the Devils Government, and hea-

vy laden with the miserable chains of his spiritual bondage, (so as these Irons of his sins enter into his very soul to afflict it with the sense of them) shall thus come, and repair to Christ: he shall have protection from Gods justice, the Devils wrath, and sins dominion; In a word, *he shall have rest, and that glorious, Mat. 11. 28. Isa. 11. 10.* Usually when a people have been ground with the oppression of some bloody Tyrant, they are apt enough to long for a change, and to listen to any overture that gives them hope of liberty, though reached by the hand of a stranger, who may prove as bad as the other; yet bondage is so grievous, that people desire to change, (as sick men their beds) though they find little ease thereby. Why then should deliverance be unwelcome to you, sinners? Deliverance brought, not by a stranger whom you need fear what his design is upon you, but your near Kinsman in blood, who cannot mean you ill, but he must first hate his own flesh; and who ever did that? To be sure not he, who though he took part of our flesh, that he might have the right of being our Redeemer; yet would have no kindred with us in the sinfulness of our nature, *Heb. 2. 14, 15.* And 'tis sin that makes us cruel, yea, to our own flesh. What can you expect from him but pure mercy, who is himself pure? They are the mercies of the wicked which are cruel. *Heb. 4. 15.* Believe it (Sins) Christ counts it his honour, that he is a King of a willing people, and not of slaves. He comes to make you free, not to bring you into bondage; to make you Kings; not vassals. None give Christ an evil word, but those who never were his subjects. Enquire but of those who have tryed both Satans service and Christs; they are best able to resolve you what they are. You see when a soul comes over from Satans quarters unto Christs, and has but once the experience of that sweetness which is in his service, there is no getting him back to his old drudgery, as they say of those, who come out of the North, (which is cold and poor) they like the warm South so well, they seldom or never go back more. What more dreadful to a gracious soul than to be delivered into the hands of Satan? or fall under the power of his lusts? It would chuse rather to leap into a burning Furnace, than be commanded by them. This is the great request a child of God makes, that he would rather whip him in his house, than turn him out of it to become a prey to Satan. O sinners, did you know (which you cannot till you come over to Christ, and embrace him as your Lord and Saviour) what the privileges of Christs servants are, and what gentle usage Saints have at Christs hands, you would say those were the only happy men in the world, which stand continually before him. His laws are writ, not with his subjects blood (as Satans are) but with his own. All his commands are acts of grace; 'tis a favour to be employed about them. To you 'tis given to believe, yea, to suffer, *Phil. 1. 29.* Such an honour the Saints esteem it to do any thing he commands, that they count God rewards them for one piece of service, if he enables them for another. *This I had (saith David) because I kept thy precepts, Psal. 119.*

56. what was the great reward he got? see, ver. 55. *I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and kept thy Law;* then follows, *This I had:* He got more strength and skill to keep the Law for the future, by his obedience past; and was he not well paid (think you) for his pains? *There's fruit even in Holiness,* the Christian hath in hand, which he eats while he is at work, that may stay his stomach untill the full reward comes, which is *eternal life, Rom. 6. 22.* Jesus Christ is a Prince that loves to see his people thrive, and grow rich under his Government. This is he whom sinners are so afraid of, that when he sets open their prison, and bids them come forth, they chuse rather to bore their ears to the Devils post, than enjoy this blessed liberty. It is no wonder that some of the Saints have (indeed when tortured) not accepted deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection, *Heb. 11. 3.* But what a riddle is this, that forlorn souls bound with the chains of their lusts, and the irresistible decree of God for their damnation, (if they believe not on the Lord Jesus,) should, as they are driving to execution, refuse deliverance? this may set Heaven and earth on wondring. Surely, dying in their sins, they cannot hope to have a better resurrection than they have a death. I am afraid rather, that they do not firmly believe that they shall have any resurrection; and then no wonder they make so light of Christs offer, who think themselves safe, when once earth in this burrough of the Grave. But let sinners know, 'tis not the grave can hold them, when the day of Asizes comes, and the judge calls for the Prisoners to the Bar. The grave was never intended to be a Sanctuary to defend sinners from the hand of justice, but a close Prison to secure them against the day of trial, that they may be forth-coming. Then sinners shall be digged out of their burroughs, and dragg'd out of their holes to answer their contempt of Christ and his grace. O how will you be astonish'd to see him become your Judge, whom you now refuse to be your King! to hear that Gospel witness against you for your damnation, which at the same time shall acquit others for their salvation! what think you to do, sinners, in that day? wilt thou cry and skream for mercy at Christs hands? Alas, when the sentence is past, thy fate will immediately be covered: condemned Prisoners are not allowed to speak: tears then are unprofitable, when no place left for repentance, either in Christs heart or thine own. Or meanest thou to apply thy self to thy old Lord, in whose service thou hast undone thy soul, and cry to him, as she to *Abah, Help, O King: Alas, thine eye shall see him in the same condemnation with thy self. Hadst thou not better now renounce the Devils rule, whilest thou maist be received into Christs Government? pour out thy tears and cries now for mercy and grace when they are to be had, than to save them for another world to no purpose?*

Quest. But possibly, thou wilt say; *How may I that am a home-born slave to sin, yea, who have lived so many years under his cursed rule, get out of his dominion and power, and be translated into the Kingdom of Christ?*

Answ. The difficulty of this great work lies not in prevailing with Christ, to receive thee for his Subject, who refuseth none that in truth of heart desire to come under his shadow. It doth not stand with his design to reject any such. Do Physicians use to chide their Patients away? Lawyers their Clients? or Generals discourage those who fall off from the enemy, and come to their side? surely no. When David was in the field, 'tis said, 1 Sam. 22. 2. *Every one that was in distress, in debt, or in discontent, gathered themselves to him, and he became a Captain over them.* And so will Christ be to every one that is truly discontented with Satans Government, and upon an inward dislike thereof, repairs to him. But the main business will be to take thee off from thy engagements to thy Lusts and Satan, till which be done, Christ will not own thee as a Subject, but look on thee as a Spy. It fares with sinners as with servants. There may be fallings out between them and their Masters, and high words pass between them, that you would think they would take up their pack and be gone in all haste; but the fray is soon over, and by next morning all is forgot, and the servants are as hard at their work as ever. O how oft are sinners taking their leave of their Lusts, and giving warning to their old Masters, they will repent and reform, and what not? but in few days they have repented of their repentance, and deformed their reformings, which shews they were drunk with some passion, when they thought or spake this; and no wonder they reverse all when they come to their true temper. Now because Satan hath many policies, by which he setteth to keep his hold of sinners; I shall discover some of them, which if thou canst withstand, it will be no hard matter to bring thee out of his power and rule.

First, Satan doth his utmost, that sinners may not have any serious thoughts of the miserable state they are in, while under his rule; or hear any thing from others, which might the least unsettle their minds from his service. Consideration (he knows) is the first step to Repentance: He that doth not consider his ways what they are, and whither they lead him, is not like to change them in haste. If *Israel* stir'd not, while *Moses* came, and had some discourse with them about their woful slavery, and the gracious thoughts of God towards them; and then they begin to desire to be gone. *Pharaoh* soon bethought him what consequence might follow upon this, and cunningly labours to prevent by doubling their task: *To wee idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore and work.* Exod. 5. 17, 18. As if he had said, Have you so much spare time to think of ending into the wilderness, and have you your tedious Conventicles (*Moses* and you) to lay your plots together? He break the knot, give them more work. Scatter them all over the Land to gather Straw, that they may not meet to entice one another's hearts from my service. Thus Satan is very jealous of the sinner, afraid every Christian that speaks to him, or Ordinance he hears, should inveigle him. By his good will he should come at neither; no, nor have a thought of Heaven or Hell

from one end of the week to the other; and that he may have as few as may be, he keeps him full-handled with work. The sinner grinds, and he is filling the Hopper, that the Mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soon as he wakes, and fills his wretched heart with some wicked thoughts, which as a Morning-draught may keep him from the infection of any favour of good that may be breathed on him by others in the day time. All the day long he watcheth him, as the Master would do his man, that he fears will run away. And at night he like a careful Jaylor, locks him up again in his Chamber with more Bolts and Fetters upon him, not suffering him to sleep as he lies on his bed; *for he hath done some mischief,* Luke 15. Ah poor wretch: was ever slave, so lookt to? As long as the Devil can keep thee thus, thou art his own sure enough. The Prodigal came to himself, before he came to his Father. He considered with himself what a starving condition he was in; his Husks were poor meat, and yet he had not enough of them neither; and how easily he might mend his Commons, if he had but grace to go home, and humble himself to his Father. Now, and not till now he goes. Resolve thus poor sinner to sit down and consider what thy state is, and what it might be, if thou wouldst but change the bondage of Satan for the sweet Government of Jesus Christ. First, Ask thy soul, whether the Devil can, after thou hast worn out thy miserable life here in his drudgery, prefer thee to a happy state in the other world, or so much as secure thee from a state of torment and woe? If he cannot, whether there be not one Jesus Christ, who is able and willing to do it? and if so, whether it be not bloody cruelty to thy precious soul, to stay any longer under the shadow of this Bramble, when thou maist make so blessed a change? A few of these thoughts abidingly laid home to thy soul, may (God striking in with them) shake the foundations of the Devils Prison, and make thee haste as fast from him, as one out of a house on fire about his ears.

Secondly, Satan hath his Instruments to oppose the messengers and overtures, which God sends by them to bring the sinner out of Satans rule. When *Moses* comes to deliver *Israel* out of the Egyptian bondage, up starts *Jannes* and *Jambres* to resist him. When *Paul* preacheth to the *Deputy*, the Devil hath his Chaplain at Court to hinder him: *Elymas*, one that was full of all subtilty and mischief. Some or other (to be sure) he will find, when God is parlying with a sinner, and persuading him to come over to Christ, that shall labour to clog the work. Either carnal friends, these he sends to plead his cause, or old Companions in wickedness, these bestir them, one while labouring to tear him out of his new way; or if that take not, by turning their old love into bitter wrath against him for playing the Apostate, and leaving him so. Or if yet he will not be stopt in his way, then he hath his daubing Preachers, (still like *Joh* Messengers, the last the worst) who with their soul-flattering, or rather murdering Doctrine shall go about to heal his wound slightly. Now as ever you desire to get out of Satans bondage, have a care

care of all these, harden thy self against the entreaties of carnal friends and relations. Resolve, that if thy Children should hang about thy knees to keep thee from Christ, thou wilt throw them away. If thy Father and Mother should lie prostrate at thy foot, rather than not go to Christ, to go over their very backs to him. Never can we part with their love upon such advantageous terms as these. And for thy Brethren in iniquity, I hope thou dost not mean to stay while thou hast their good will, then even ask the Devils also. Heaven is but little worth if thou hast not a heart to despise a little shame, and bear a few frumps from prophane *Ishmaels* for thy hopes of it. Let them spit on thy face, Christ will wipe it off; let them laugh, so thou winnest. If they follow not thy example before they die, the shame will be their own; God himself shall spit it on their face before men and Angels, and then kick them into Hell. And lastly, escape but the snare of those flatterers, who use their tongues only to lick sinners Consciences whole with their *placemints*, soothing Doctrine, and thou art fair for a Christ, ask not counsel of them, they may go about to give you ease, but all those stitches with which they sew up thy wounds, must be ripped open, or thou diest for it.

Thirdly, Satan labours to while off the sinner with delays. Floating, flitting thoughts of Repenting he fears not, he can give sinners leave to talk what they will do; so he can beg time, and by his art keep such thoughts from coming to a head, and ripening into a present resolution; few are in Hell but thought of repenting, but Satan so handled the matter, that they could never pitch upon the time in earnest when to do it. If ever thou meanest to get out of his clutches, fly out of his doors, and run forth thy life, where ever this warning finds thee, stay not, though in the midst of thy joys, with which thy lusts entertain thee: As the Paper which came to *Bremius* (from that Senator his dear Friend) took him at Supper with his Wife and Children, and bade him *see cito, citius, citissime*; which he did, leaving his dear company and sweet cheer; so do thou, or else thou maist repent thy stay when 'tis too late. A Vision charged the *wise men* to go back another way, and not so much as see *Herod*, though he had charged them otherwise. O go not back, Drunkard, to thy good Fellows, Adulterer to thy Queens; Covetous wretch, to thy Usury and unlawful gain; turn another way, and gratiate not the Devil a moment. The command saith, now repent; the Imperative hath no Future Tense. God saith, *To day while it is to day*: The Devil saith, *To morrow*; which wilt thou obey, God or him? Thou saist, thou meanest at last to do it, then why not now? Wilt thou stand with God for a day or two, huckle with him for a penny? Heaven is not such a hard pennyworth, but thou maist come up to his terms; And which is the morrow thou meanest? thou hast but a day in thy life for ought thou knowest, where then canst thou find a morrow for repentance? But shouldst thou have as many days to come as *Methuselah* lived, yet know, sin is hereditary, and such sort of diseases grow more upon us

with our years. 'Tis with long accustomed sinners, as with those who have sate long under a Government, they rather like to be as they are (though but ill on it) than think of a change; or like those who in a journey have gone out of the way all the day, will rather take any new way, over hedge or ditch, than think of going so far back to be set right.

Fourthly, Satan labours to comprmise the business, and bring it to a composition between him and Christ, when Conscience will not be pacified, then Satan for quiets sake will yield to something, as *Pharaoh* with *Moses*: after much ado he is willing they should go, *Exod. 8. 28.* And *Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness.* But then comes in this Caution, *only you shall not go very far away.* Thus Satan will yield the sinner may pray, and hear the Word, and make a goodly profession, so he doth not go very far, but that he may have him again at night. If God hath the Mattens, he looks for the Vigils, and thus he is content the day should be divided. Doth Conscience press a Reformation and Change of the sinners course? rather than fail, he'll grant that also; yet as *Pharaoh* when he yielded they should go, he meant *their little ones should stay behind as a Pledge for those that went.* *Exod. 10. 11.* So Satan must have some one sin that must be spared, and no matter though it be a little one. Now if ever you would get out of the Devils rule, make no composition with him. Christ will be King or no King. Not a hoof must be left behind, or any thing which may make an errand for thee afterwards to return. Take therefore thy everlasting farewell of every sin, as to the sincere and fix purpose of thy heart, or thou dost nothing. *Paul* joyns his Faith and his purpose together, *2 Tim. 3. 10.* not the one without the other. At the promulgation of the Law in *Sinai*, God did, as it were, give *Israel* the Oath of Allegiance to him; then he told them what Law he would rule them by, and they gave their consent; this was the *espousal* which God puts them in mind of, *Jerem. 2.* in which they were solemnly married together, as King and Subjects. Now mark, before God would do this, he will have them out of *Egypt*. They could not obey his Laws, and *Pharaohs* Idolatrous Customs also, and therefore he will have them out, before he solemnly espouseth them to be a Nation peculiarly his. Thou must be a Widow before Christ marry thee; he will not lie by the side of anothers Wife. O that it were come to this! then the Match would soon be made between Christ and thee. Let me ask thee, poor soul, hast thou seriously considered who Christ is, and what his sweet Government is? and couldst thou find in thy heart (out of an inward abhorrency of Sin and Satan, and a liking to Christ) to renounce Sin and Satan, and chuse Christ for thy Lord? Doth thy soul say as *Rebecca, I will go*, if I could tell how to get to him. But alas, I am here a poor Prisoner, I cannot shake off my Fetters, and set my self at liberty to come unto Christ. Well, poor soul, canst thou groan heartily under thy bondage? then for thy comfort know, thy deliverance is at the door; he that heard

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the cry of *Israel* in *Egypt*, will hear thine also, yea, come and save thee out of the hands of thy Lusts. He will not, as some, who entangle thy affections by making love to thee, and then give over the suit, and come at thee no more. If Christ has won thy heart, he'll be true for thee, and be at all the cost to bring thee out of thy Prison-house also; yea, take the pains to come to thee himself, and bring with him these wedding garments in which he will carry thee from thy prison to his Fathers house with joy, where thou shalt live not only as a subject under his Law, but as a Bride in the bosome of his love; and what can be added to thy happiness more? when thy Prince is thy husband, and that such a Prince to whom all other are vassals, even the Prince of the world himself; and yet so gracious, that his Majesty hinders not his familiar converse with thee a poor creature, but adds to the condescension thereof, therefore God chuseth to mix names of greatness and relation together; the one to sweeten the other: *Thy Maker is thy husband, Thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall be called, Isa. 54. 5.* And to utter in those promises with titles of greatest dread and terror to the creature, that hold forth the greatest condescensions of love; How can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul? which is more, than if he had said, such a one should dwell with him; for a Beggar to live at Court is not so much as the King to dwell with him in his Cottage. Yet this promise is utter'd in with the most magnificent titles; *Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabits eternity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, Isa. 57. 15.* and why such titles? but to take away the fears which his Saints are prone to take up from them. Will the high and lofty One; (saith the humble soul) look on me a poor worm? will the holy God come near such an unclean creature, (saith the contrite one?) *Isaiah* himself cryed he was undone at the sight of God, and this attribute proclaim'd before him, *Isa. 7.* Now God prefixeth these, that the creature may know his Majesty and holiness, which seem so terrible to us, are no prejudice to his love; yea, so gracious a Prince is thy Husband, that he delights rather his Saints should call him by names of love than state. *Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt no more call me Baali, Hof. 2. 16.* That is my Husband, not my Lord.

SECT. IV.

Doct. The second point follows. Ignorance above other sins enslaves a soul to Satan, a knowing man may be his slave, but an ignorant one can be no other. Knowledge doth not make the heart good, but it is impossible that without knowledge it should be good. There are some sins which an ignorant person cannot commit; there are more which he cannot but commit; knowledge is the Key, *Luk. 11. 52.* Christ the door, *John 15.* Christ opens Heaven, Knowledge opens Christ. In three particulars the Point will appear more fully.

First, Ignorance opens a door for sin to enter.

Secondly, as ignorance lets sin in, so it locks it up in the soul, and the soul in it.

Thirdly, as it lockt it up, so it shuts all means of help out.

First, Ignorance opens the door for Satan to enter in with his Troops of Lusts; where the Watch is blind, the City is soon taken: an ignorant man sins, and like drunken *Lot*, he knows not when the tempter comes, nor when he goes: he is like a man that walks in his sleep, knows not where he is, nor what he does. *Father, forgive them, (saith Christ) they know not what they do.* The Apostle, *1. Corinth. 15.* having reprov'd the sensuality of some, *verse 32.* who made the consideration of death, by which others are awed from sin, a provocative to sin, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die,* he gives an account of this absurd reasoning; *All have not the knowledge of God.* An ignorant person is a man in shape, and a beast in heart. *There is no knowledge in the Land,* saith the Prophet, *Hofea 4. 2.* and see what a regiment follows this blind Captain, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and what not? We read, *2 Tim. 3. 5.* of some *laden with sin*; here are trees full of bitter fruit, and what dung shall we find at the root, that makes them so fruitful, but Ignorance? *silly women,* and such *who never come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Secondly, Ignorance as it lets sin in, so it locks it up, and the soul in it, such a one lies in Satans inner dungeon, where no light of conviction comes, darkness inclines to sleep, a blind mind and drowsie conscience go together. When the storm arose, the mariners who were awake, fell a praying to their God; but the sleeper fears nothing. Ignorance lays the soul asleep under the hatches of stupidity. God hath planted in the beast a natural fear of that which threatens hurt to it. Go to thrust a beast into a pit, and it hangs back, nature shews its abhorrency. Man being of a nobler nature, and subject to more dangers, God hath set a double guard on him, as a natural fear of danger, so a natural shame that covers the face at the doing of any unworthy action. Now an ignorant man hath slept from both these his Keepers; he sins and blusheth not, because he knows not his guilt: he wants that Magistrate within, who should put him to shame; neither is he afraid, because he knows not his danger; therefore he plays with his sin, as the child with the waves, that by and by will swallow him up. Conscience is Gods alarm to call the sinner up; It doth not always ring in his ear that hath knowledge, being usually set by God to go off at some special hour; when God is speaking in an Ordinance, or striking in a Providence; but in an ignorant soul, this is silent. The Clock cannot go when the weights are taken off; Conscience is only a witness to what it knows.

Thirdly, ignorance shuts out the means of recovery. Friends and Ministers, yea, Christ himself stands without, and cannot help the creature, as such threatnings and promises, all of no use; he fears not the one, he desires not the other, because he knows neither: Heaven-way cannot be found in the dark, and therefore the first thing

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God doth, is to spring in with a light, and let the creature know where he is, and what the way is to get out of his prison-house, without which all attempts to escape are in vain. There is some glimmering light in all, *Non dantur pura tenebrae*, I think, is good Divinity as well as Philosophy: and this night-light may discover many sins, produce inward prickings of conscience for them; yea, stir up the creature to step aside, rather than drown in such broad waters. There are some things so cruel and costly, that the most prostrate soul may in time be weary of their service for low ends: but what will all this come to, if the creature be not acquainted with Christ the true way to God, faith and repentance the only way to Christ? such a one after all this bustle, instead of making an escape from Satan, will run full into his mouth another way. There are some ways which at first seem right to the traveller; yet wind about so insensibly, that when a man hath gone far, and thinks himself near home, he is carried back to the place from whence he set forth. This will befall every soul ignorant of Christ, and the way of life through him; after many years travel, as they think, towards Heaven by their good meanings, blind devotions and reformation, when they shall expect to be within sight of Heaven, they shall find themselves even where they were at first, as very slaves to Satan as ever.

Use 1. This speaks to you that are Parents, see what need you have of instructing your Children, and training them up betimes in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Till these chains of darkness be knocked off their minds, there is no possibility of getting them out of the Devils Prison; he hath no such tame slave as the ignorant soul: such a one goes before Satan (as the silly sheep before the Butcher) and knows not who he is, nor whither he carries him; and can you see the Devil driving your Children to the shambles, and not labour to rescue them out of his hands? Bloody Parents you are, that can thus harden your bowels against your own flesh. Now the more to provoke you to your duty, take these considerations.

1. Your relation obligeth you to take care of their precious souls. 'Tis the soul is the child rather than the body: and therefore in Scripture put for the whole man. *Abraham and Lot went forth with all the souls they had gotten in Haran, Gen. 12.* So, *all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt*; that is, all the persons. The body is but the sheath; and if one should leave his Sword with you to be kept safely for him, would you throw away the blade, and only preserve the scabbard? And yet Parents do commonly judge of their care and love to their children by providing for the outward man, by their breeding and teaching them how to live like men (as they say) when they are dead and gone, and comfort themselves to their civil place and rank in the world. These things indeed are commendable, but is not the most weighty business of all forgotten in the mean time, while no endeavour is used that they may live as Christians, and know how to carry themselves in duty to God or man as such? and can they do this without the knowledge

of the holy rule they are to walk by? I am sure David knew no means effectual without this, and therefore propounds the Question, *Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way?* and he resolves it in the next words, *by taking heed thereto according to thy word, Psal. 119. 9.* And how shall they compare their way and the word together, if not instructed? Our Children are not born with Bibles in their heads or hearts. And who ought to be the Instructor, if not the Parent? yea, who will do it with such natural affection? As I have heard sometimes a Mother say in other respects, *Who can take such pains with my Child, and be so careful as my self that am its Mother?* Bloody Parents then they are, who acquaint not their Children with God or his Word; what do they but put them under a necessity of perishing, if God stir not up some to shew more mercy than themselves to them? Is it any wonder to hear that ship to be sunk, or dahl'd upon the Rock, which was put to Sea without Card or Compass? no more is it, they should ingulph themselves in sin and perdition, that are thrust forth into the world, which is a Sea of temptation, without the knowledge of God, or their duty to him. In the fear of God think of it Parents: your Children have souls, and these God set you to watch over; It will be a poor account at the last day, if you can only say, Lord, here are my Children, I bred them compleat Gentlemen, left them rich and wealthy. The rust of that silver you left them will witness your folly and sin, that you would do so much for that which rusts, and nothing for the enriching their minds with the knowledge of God, which would have endured for ever; happy if you had left them less money and more knowledge.

2. Consider, it hath ever been the Saints practice to instruct and teach their Children the way of God. David we find dropping instruction into his Son Solomon, *1 Chron. 28. 9. Know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.* Though a King, he did not put it off to his Chaplains, but whetted it on him with his own lips. Neither was his Queen Bathsheba forgetful of her duty, her gracious counsel is upon record, *Prov. 31.* and that she may do it with the more seriousness and solemnity, we find her stirring up her motherly bowels, to let her son see that she fetcht her words deep, even from her heart: *What my son, and what the son of my womb! and what the son of my vows!* ver. 2. Indeed that counsel is most like to go to the heart, which comes from thence. Parents know not what impression such melting expressions of their love mingled with their instructions leave on the Children. God bids *draw forth our souls in the hungry*, that is more than draw our purse, which may be done, and the heart hard and churlish. Thus we should draw forth our souls with our instructions. What need I tell of Timothy's Mother and Grand-mother, who acquainted him with the Scripture from his youth? and truly, I think, that man calls in question his own Saintship, that takes no care to acquaint his Child with God, and the way that leads to him. I have known some, that though prophane themselves, have

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Oh Parents!

have been very solicitous their Children should have good education; but never knew I a Saint that was regardless whether his Child knew God or not.

It is an act of great unrighteousness not to instruct our Children. We read of some *that hold the truth in unrighteousness*; among others, those Parents do it, that lock up the knowledge of these saving truths from their Children, which God hath imparted to themselves. There is a double unrighteousness in it.

First, They are unrighteous to their Children, who may lay as much claim to their care of instructing them, as to their labour and industry in laying up a temporal estate for them. If he should do unrighteously with his Child, that should not endeavour to provide for his outward maintenance, or having gathered an estate, should lock it up, and deny his Child Necessaries, then much more he that lives in ignorance of God, whereby he renders himself incapable of providing for his Childs soul; but most of all, he that having gathered a stock of Knowledge, yet hides it from his Child

Secondly, They are unrighteous to God.

First, In that they keep that Talent in their own hands which was given to be paid out to their Children. When God reveal'd himself to Abraham, he had respect to Abraham's Children; and therefore we find God promising himself this at Abraham's hands, upon which he imparts his mind to him concerning his purpose of destroying Sodom; *Shall I hide from Abraham* (saith God) *that thing which I do? I know that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 17, 19. The Church began at first in a Family, and was preserved by the godly care of Parents in instructing their Children and Household in the Truths of God, whereby the Knowledge of God was transmitted from Generation to Generation; and though now the Church is not confined to such strait limits, yet every private Family is as a little Nursery to the Church; if the Nursery be not carefully planted, the Orchard will soon decay. O could you be willing, Christians, that your Children when you are laid in the dust, should be turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine, and prove a generation that do not know God? Atheism needs not be planted, you do enough to make your Children such, if you do not endeavour to plant Religion in their minds. The very neglect of the Gardiner to sow and dress his Garden, gives advantage enough to the Weeds to come up. This is the difference between Religion and Atheism, Religion doth not grow without planting, but will die even where it is planted without watering. Atheism, Irreligion, and Prophaneness are weeds will grow without setting, but they will not die without plucking up; all care and means little enough to stub them up. And therefore you that are Parents, and do not teach your Children, deal the more unrighteously with God, because you neglect the best season in their whole life for planting in them the knowledge of God, and plucking up the contrary Weeds of

Atheism and Irreligion. Young Weeds come up with most ease, sinful ignorance in youth becomes wilful ignorance; yea, Impudence in age: you will not instruct them when young, and they will scorn their Ministers should when they are old.

Secondly, You deal unrighteously with God, that train not up your Children in the knowledge of God, because your Children, if you be Christian Parents, are Gods Children; they stand in a federal relation to him, which the Children of others do not; and shall Gods Children be nurtured with the Devils Education? Ignorance is that which he blinds the minds of the Children of Disobedience withal. Shall Gods Children have no better breeding? The Children of a Jew God made account were born to him, *Thy Sons and Daughters whom thou hast born to me*, Ezek. 16. 26. God had by the Covenant which he made with that people, married them unto himself, and therefore as the Wife bears her Children to her Husband (they are his Children) so God calls the Children of the Jews his, and complains of it as an horrible wickedness in them, that they should not bring them up as his, but offer them up to Moloch, *They have slain my Children* (saith God) v. 21. And are not the Children of a Christian his Children as well as the Jews were? Hath God recall'd or altered the first Covenant, and cut off the Entail? and darest thou slay not only thy Children, but the Lords also? and is not Ignorance that bloody Knife that doth it? *My people are destroyed for lack of Knowledge*, Hos. 4. 6. Do you not tremble to offer them, not to Moloch, but the Devil, whom before you had given up to God, when you brought them to that solemn Ordinance of Baptism, and there desired before God and man that they might become Covenant servants to the Lord; and hast thou bound them to him, and never teach them, either who their Lord and Master is, or what their duty is as his Servants? Of thy own mouth will God condemn thee.

Fourthly, Consider you who are Parents, that by not instructing your Children, you entitle yourselves to all the sins they shall commit to their death. We may sin by a Proxy, and make others Fact our own. *Thou hast* (saith God by Nathan to David concerning Uriah) *slain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon*, 2 Sam. 12. 9. So thou maist pierce Christ, and slay him over and over with the bloody sword of thy wicked Children, if thou beest not the more careful to train them up in the fear of God. There might be something said for that Heathen, who when the Scholar abused him, fell upon the Master and struck him: Indeed 'tis possible he might be in the most fault. When the Child breaks the Sabbath, it is his sin; but more the Father's, if he never taught him what the Command of God was. And if the Parent be accessory to the sin of the Child, it will be hard for him to escape a partnership, yea, a precedence in the punishment. O what a sad Greeting will such have of their Children at the great Day! Will they not then accuse you to be the Murderers of their precious Souls, and lay their Blood at your door, cursing you to your face, that taught them

no better? But grant that by the interposition of thy timely Repentance, thou securest thy soul from the judgment of that day, yet God can scourge thee here for the neglect of thy Duty to them. How oft do we see Children become heavy Crosses to such Parents? It is just that they should not know their duty to thee, who didst not teach them their duty to God; or if thou should not live so long to see this, yet sure thou canst not but go in sorrow to thy Grave, to leave Children behind thee that are on their way to Hell. Some think, that *Levi's* lingering so long in *Sodom*, was his lothness to leave his Sons in Law behind him to perish in the flames. No doubt (good man) it was very grievous to him, and this might make him stay pleading with them, till the Angel pull'd him away. And certainly nothing makes holy Parents more loth to be gone out of the reach of that fire (before they go) that God will rain upon the heads of sinners. You know not how soon the Messenger may come to pluck you hence, do your best while you are among them to win them home to God.

Use 2. To the Ministers of the Gospel. Let this stir up your bowels of compassion towards those many ignorant souls in your respective Congregations, who know not the right hand from the left. This, this is the great destroyer of the Country, which Ministers should come forth against with all their care and strength. More are swept to Hell with this plague of spiritual darkness than any other. Where the light of Knowledge and Conviction is, there commonly is a sense and pain that accompanies the sinner when he doth evil, which forceth some now and then to enquire for a Physician, and come in the distress of their spirits to their Minister or others for counsel, but the ignorant soul feels no such smart: If the Minister stay till he sends for him to instruct him, he may sooner hear the Bell go for him, than any Messenger come for him; you must seek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. These are a sort of people that are more afraid of their remedy than their disease, and study more to hide their ignorance, than how they may have it cured; which should make us pity them the more, because they can pity themselves so little. I confess, it is no small unhappiness to some of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we have neither time nor strength to make our addressees to every particular person in our Congregations, and attend on them as their needs require, and yet cannot well satisfy our Consciences otherwise. But let us look to it, that though we cannot do to the height of what we would, we be not found wanting in what we may. Let not the difficulty of our Province make us like some, who when they see they have more work upon their hands than they can well dispatch, grow sick of it, and sit down out of a lazy despondency, and do just nothing. He that hath a great Houe running to ruine, and but a small Purse, 'tis better for him to repair now a little and then a little, than let all fall down, because he cannot do it all at once. Many Ministers may complain of their Predecessors, that they left them their people more out of repair than their houses, and this makes the

work great indeed. As the Jews, who were to revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish before they could build the Wall, yet it went up, because *the people had a mind to work*, Nehem. 4. O if once our hearts were but fill'd with zeal for God, and compassion to our peoples souls, we would up and be doing, though we could but lay a Brick a day, and God would be with us. May be you who find a people rude and sottiſhly ignorant, like stones in the Quarry, and trees unfell'd, shall not bring the work to such perfection in your days as you desire; yet as *David* did for *Solomon*, thou maist by thy pains in teaching and instructing them, prepare materials for another who shall rear the Temple. It is very ordinary for one Minister to enter into the labours of another, to reap those by a work of Conversion, in whom a former Minister hath cast the seed of Knowledge and Conviction: And when God comes to reckon with his Work-men, the Plough-man and Sower shall have his penny, as well as the Harvest-man and Reaper. O it is a blessed thing to be (as *Job* saith he was) eyes to the blind, much more to blind souls; such are the Ministers, God himself calls *Pastors* after his own heart, that feed his people with knowledge and understanding, Jer. 3. 15. But woe to those that are accessary to their peoples ignorance. Now a Minister may be accessary to the ignorance of his people,

First, By his own Ignorance. Knowledge is so fundamental to the work and Calling of a Minister, that he cannot be one without it: *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children*, Hof. 4. 6. The want of Knowledge in a Minister is such a defect, as cannot be supplied by any thing else; be he never so meek, patient, bountiful, unblameable, if he hath not skill to divide the Word aright, he is not cut out for a Minister. Every thing is good, as it is good for the end it is appointed to; a Knife, though it had a Haft of Diamonds, yet if it will not cut, 'tis no Knife. A Bell, if not found, is no Bell. The great work of a Minister is to teach others, his Lips are to preserve knowledge, he should be as conversant in the things of God, as others in their particular Trades. Ministers are called Lights; if the Light then be Darkness, how great is the darkness of that people like to be? I know these stars in Christs hands are not all of the same magnitude; there is a greater glory of Gift and Graces shines in some than others; yet so much light is necessary to every Minister as was in the star the Wise men saw at Christs Birth; to be able out of the word to direct sinners the safe and true way to Christ and Salvation. O Sirs, it is a sad way of getting a Living by killing of men, as some unskilful Physicians do; but much more to get a temporall Livelihood by ruining souls through our Ignorance. He is a cruel man to the poor Passengers, who will undertake to be Pilot, when he never so much as learnt his Compass.

Secondly, By his Negligence. It is all one if the Nurse hath no milk in her Breasts, or having, draws it not forth to her Child. There is a woe to the *Idol-Shepherd*, Zech. 11. such as have mouths,

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but speak not; lips, but not to feed the people with knowledge. It shall be the peoples sin, if they feed not when bread is before them, but woe to us if we give them not meat in due season. O Sirs, what shall we say to our Lord that trusts us, if those abilities which he hath given us as market-money to buy bread for our people, be found wrapt up in a napkin of sloth? if that time, wherein we should have been teaching and instructing them, shall appear to be wasted in our pleasures, or employed about our carnal profits. That servant shall have but a sad welcome of his Master when he comes home, that shall be found out of the way with the key, and the family starving in the mean time for want of provision.

Thirdly, By his unedifying preaching, when he preacheth unsound Doctrine, which doth not perfect the understanding, but corrupt it. Better he did leave them in simple ignorance, than colour their minds with a false die, or when that he preacheth is frothy and flashy, no more fit to feed their souls, than husks the Prodigals belly, which when they know they are little the wiser for their souls good. Or when his discourses are so highly flown, that the poor people stand gazing, as those who have lost the sight of their Preacher, and at the end of the Sermon cannot tell what he would have. Or those who preach only truths, that are for the higher forms of Professors, who have their senses well exercised, excellent may be for building up three or four eminent Saints in the Congregation; but in the mean time, the weak ones in the family, (who should indeed chiefly be thought on, because least able to guide themselves, or carve for themselves) these are forgotten. He sure is an unwise builder, that makes a scaffold as high as Pauls steeple, when his work is at the bottom, and he is to lay the foundation, whereas the Scaffold should rise as the building goes up. So Paul advanceth in his doctrine; as his hearers do in knowledge; Heb. 6. 1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. Let us.* It is well indeed when the people can keep pace with the Preacher. To preach truths and notions above the hearers capacity, is like a Nurse, that should go to feed a child with a spoon too big to go into its mouth. We may by such preaching please ourselves, some of higher attainments, but what shall poor ignorant ones do in the mean time. He is the faithful steward that considers both. The Preacher is (as Paul saith of himself) *a debtor both to the Greek and to the Barbarian, to the wise and to the unwise, Rom. 1. 14.* to prepare truths suitable to the degree of his hearers. Let the wise have their portion, but let them be patient to see the weaker in the family served also.

Fourthly, a Minister may be necessary to the ignorance of his people, when through the scandal of his life he prejudiceth his Doctrine, as a Cook, who by his nastiness makes others afraid to eat what comes out of his foul fingers; or when through his supercilious carriage, his poor people dare not come to him. He that will do any good in the Ministers calling, must be as careful as the

Fisher, that he doth nothing to scare souls away from him, but all to allure and invite, that they may be toll'd within the compass of his net.

Use 3. Is the ignorant soul such a slave to Satan? Let this stir you up that are ignorant, from your seats of sloth, whereon like the blind Egyptians you sit in darkness: speedily come out of this darkness, and resolve not to go to utter darkness. The covering of Hamans face did tell him, that he should not stay in the Kings presence. If thou livest in ignorance, it shews thou art in Gods black bill; he puts this cover before their eyes in wrath, whom he means to turn off into Hell, 2 Cor. 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is to those that perish.* In one place sinners are threatned, *they shall die without knowledge, Job 36.* in another place, *they shall dye in their sins, John 8.* He indeed that dies without knowledge, dies in his sins: and what more fearful doom can the great God pass upon a creature than this? better dye in a Prison, dye in a ditch, than die in ones sins. If thou die in thy sins, thou shalt rise in thy sins: as thou fallest asleep in the dust, so thou awakest in the morning of the resurrection; if an ignorant Christless wretch, as such thou shalt be arraigned and judged. That God whom now sinners bid depart from them, will then be worth their acquaintance (themselves being Judges;) but alas! then he will throw their own words in their teeth, and bid them depart from him, he desires not the knowledge of them. O sinners, you shall see at last, God can better be without your company in Heaven, than you could without his knowledge on earth: Yet, yet 'tis day, draw your curtains, and behold Christ shining upon your face with Gospel-light; hear wisdom crying in the streets, and Christ piping under your window in the voice of his Spirit and Messengers, *How long will ye simple ones love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, and make known my words unto you, Prov. 1. 21, 22, 23.* What can you say (sinners) for your sottish ignorance? Where is your cloak for this sin? the time hath been when the Word of the Lord was precious, and there was no open vision, not a Bible to be found in Town or Country; when the tree of knowledge was forbidden fruit, and none might taste thereof without licence from the Pope? happy he that could get a leaf or two of the Testament into a corner, afraid to tell the Wife of his bosom. O how sweet were these waters when they were forced to steal them? But you have the Word, or may in your houses; you have those that open them every Sabbath in their Assemblies, many of you at least have the offers of your Ministers to take any pains with you in private, passionately beseeching you to pity your souls, and receive instruction: yea, 'tis the lamentation they generally take up, you will not come unto them that you may receive light. How long may a poor Minister sit in his Study, before any of the ignorant sort will come upon such an errand? Lawyers have their Clients, and Physicians their Patients: these are sought after, and call'd up at midnight for counsel: but alas! the soul, which is more worth than rayment and body

too, that is neglected, and the Minister seldom thought on, till both these be sent away. Perhaps when the Physician gives them over for dead, then we must come and close up those eyes with comfort, which were never opened to see Christ in his truth, or be counted cruel, because we will not sprinkle them with this holy water, and anoint them for the Kingdom of Heaven, though they know not a step of the way which leads to it. Ah, poor wretches! what comfort would you have us speak to those, to whom God himself speaks terror? Is Heaven ours to give to whom we please? or is it in our power to alter the Laws of the most High, and save those whom he condemns? Do you not remember the curse that is to fall upon his head, *that maketh the blind to wander out of the way?*

Deut. 27. 18. what curse then would be our portion, if we should confirm such blind souls, that are quite out of the way to Heaven, encouraging you to go on and expect to reach Heaven at last, when God knows your feet stand in those paths that lead to eternal death? No, 'tis written, we cannot, and God will not reverse it; you may read your very names among those damned souls which Christ comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on, who the Apostle tells us are such, *that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Thel. 1. 8. And therefore in the fear of God, let this provoke you, of what age or sex, rank or condition soever in the world, to labour for the saving knowledge of God in Christ, *whom to know is life eternal.* Are ye young? Enquire after God betimes, while your parts are fresh, and memory strong, before the throng of worldly cares divert you, or lusts of youth debauch you. The feet of those lusts which have buried millions of others in perdition, stand ready to carry you the same way, if preventing grace come not and deliver you out of their hands, by seasoning your minds with the knowledge of God. This mornings draught may prevent thy being infected with the ill favours thou may'st receive from the corrupt examples of others. Nay, how long thy stay may be in the world thou knowest not, see whether thou canst not find graves of thy length in the burial place, and if thou shouldst dye ignorant of God and his Law, what would then become of thee? The small brush, and the old logs, young sinners, and those that are withered with age, meet and burn together. Or if thou shouldst stay a while longer hete, may be because thou wilt not learn now, God will not teach thee then: Or if thou shouldst in thy old age get acquaintance with God, yet 'tis sad to be sowing thy seed, when thou shouldst be reaping thy sheaves, learning to know God, when thou mightest be comforting thy self from the old acquaintance thou hast enjoyed with him. *Are you old and ignorant?* Alas, poor creature! your life in the socket, and this candle of the Lord not set up and lighted in your understanding? your body bowing to the dust, and nature tolling the passing Bell, as it were, and you (like one going in the dark) know not whither death will lead you or leave you. 'Tis like, the infirmities of age make you wish your bones were even laid at rest in the

grave: but if you should dye in this condition, your poor souls would even wish they were here again with their old burdens on their back; aches and discafes of old age are grievous, but damned souls would thank God, if he would bless them with such a Heaven, as to lie in these pains to escape the torments of the other: O bethink you before you go hence; the less time you have, the more diligence you must use to gain knowledge; we need not be earnest, (one would think) to bid the poor prisoner learn his book, that cannot read, when he knows he shall be hang'd if he read not his neck-verse. 'Tis not indeed the bare knowing the truths of the Gospel, saves; but the gross ignorance of them to be sure will damn souls. *Are you poor?* It is not your poverty is your sin or misery. Were you Gods poor, rich in knowledge and faith, you were happy, *Eccles. 4. 13. Better is a poor and wise child, than a foolish King, who will no more be admonish'd*; yea, so happy, that did the Princes of the world understand themselves aright, they would wish themselves in our cloaths, how ragged soever they are, rather than be in their own robes; there are better making for you in Heaven, which you shall put on, when theirs shall be pull'd off to their shame: It will not then trouble you that you were, while in the world, poor; but it will torment them that they were so rich and great, and so poor to God, and beggarly in their souls.

Are you rich? Labour for the knowledge of the most High. Solomon had more of the worlds treasure than a thousand of you have, and yet we find him hard at Prayer, tugging with God for knowledge, 1 Chron. 1. 10. All these outward enjoyments are but *vagina bonorum*, as afflictions are but *vagina malorum*, I am afraid many men think themselves priviledged by their worldly greatness from this duty, as if God were bound to save them, because rich. Alas, Sirs, there are not so many of you like to come there. I must confess it would make one tremble to think what a small number those among the great ones that shall be saved, are summed up into. *Not many great, not many rich;* Why so few sav'd? Because so few have saving knowledge. O the Atheism, the ignorance, the sottish barbarism that is to be found even in those that the world applaud, and even worship because of their lands and estates, who yet are not able to give any account of their faith? A poor Leather-coat Christian will shame and catechize a hundred of them. If Heaven were to be purchased with house and lands, then these would carry it away from the poor Disciples of Jesus Christ, they have their hundreds and thousands lye by them for a purchase always, but this money is not current in Heavens Exchange. *This is life eternal, to know thee, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Quest. But how may an ignorant soul attain to knowledge?

Ans. First, be deeply affected with thy ignorance. Some are blind, as *Laodicea*, and know it not, *Rev. 3. 17.* As ignorance blinds the mind, so pride is a blind before their ignorance, that they know it not. These have such a high opinion of themselves, that they take it ill any should suspect them

them as such; these of all men are most out of the way to knowledge, they are too good to learn of man, as they think, and too bad to be taught of God. The Gate into Christs School is low, and these cannot stoop: The Master himself is so humble and lowly, that he will not teach a proud Scholar. Therefore first become a fool in thy own eye. A wiser man than thy self hath confessed as much, Prov. 30. 2, 3. *I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man, I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy.* When thou art come to thy self to own and blush at the brutish ignorance of thy mind, thou art fit to be admitted into Christs School. *If they be ashamed, then shew them the pattern of the house,* Ezek. 43. 10.

Secondly, Be faithful with that little knowledge thou hast. Art thou convinced this is a sin, and that is a duty? Follow the light close, you know not what this little may grow to. We use to set up our Children with a little stock at first, and as they use it, so we adde. The Kingdom of God comes of small beginnings. God complains of Israel, they were *brutish in their knowledge*, Jer. 10. 14. He doth not say brutish in their ignorance; had they sinned because they did not know better, this would have excused *atanto*, but they did that which was brutish and unreasonable, as their worshipping graven Images notwithstanding they knew to the contrary. That man shall not excell in knowledge who prostitutes it to sin, Job 36. 12. *If they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and shall die without knowledge.* A Candle pent up close in a dark Lanthorn, swails out apace: and so doth light shut up in the Conscience, and not suffered to come forth in the conversation. Those Heathens that are charged for *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. 1. 18. the next news you hear of them is, that *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*, ver. 21.

Thirdly, Ply the Throne of Grace. *Bene oraffe est bene studuisse*: he is the best Student in Divinity, that studies most upon his knees. Knowledge is a divine Gift; all light is from Heaven. God is the Father of Light, and Prayer puts the soul under the pupillage of God. *If any one lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.* This is more than naked knowledge, wisdom how to use it. Study may make one a great Scholar in the Scriptures, but Prayer makes a wise Christian, as it obtains sanctified knowledge, without which it is no perfect gift, but *seer aduers*, a gift and no gift. Pray then with an humble boldness, God gives it to all that ask, and that *awake*, candidly, liberally, not like proud man who will rather put one to shame who is weak, for his Ignorance, than take the pains to teach him. Thy petition is very pleasing to God. Remember how Solomon spied upon the like occasion, and promise thy self the same success. Christs School is a free School; he denies none that come to him, so they will submit to the Orders of the School; and though all have not an answer in the same degree of Knowledge (it is not needful that all should be Solomon in knowledge, except all were to be Solomon in place) yet the meanest Disciple that Christ

sends forth shall be furnished with saving knowledge, enough to fit him for his admittance into Heavens Academy. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after bring me to glory.*

Fourthly, Thou must bestow some time for thy diligent search after truth. Truth lies deep, and must be digged for. Since man was turned out of Paradise, he can do nothing without labour, except sin (this follows his hand indeed) but this treasure of Knowledge calls for Spade and Mattock. We are bid *search the Scriptures*, and Dan. 12. 4. *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*; a Metaphor from Merchants, who bestir themselves to get an estate, run to and fro, first in one Land, then in another, where-ever they hear of any thing to be got, thither they post, though to the ends of the earth: Thus must the soul run from one Duty to another, one while read, and anon meditate on what he hath read, then pray over his Meditations, and ask counsel after all. What is the meaning of this, and how understand you that? *Non schola Epicuri facit magnos viros, sed contubernium.* There is more light got sometimes by a short Conference with a Preacher, than by his whole Sermon. Be sure thou compass all the means for Knowledge within the walk of thy endeavour. In this thy search for Knowledge observe three things.

First, The end thou propofest, that it be pure and holy, not merely to know, as some do, who labour for knowledge, as many for estates, and when they have got it, look on their Notions, as they on their Bags of money, but have not a heart to use their knowledge for their own or others good, this is a sore evil. Speculative knowledge, like *Rachel*, is fair, but barren. Not to be known and admired by others for thy stature in Knowledge above thy Brethren, verily it is too base an end to aim at in seeking knowledge, especially such as is the knowledge of God and Christ. To see a Hea then study for knowledge in Philosophy, and then carry all his Labour to this Market, and think himself rewarded with obtaining the name of a wise man, is though base, yet more tolerable: but for one that knows God, and what it is to enjoy him, for such an one to content himself with a blast or two of sorry mans vain breath, this is folly without witness: look thou sleight higher in thy end than so. Labour for knowledge that thou maist fear God whom thou knowest; thus David, Psal. 119. 33. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.* The Word of God is called a Light unto our feet, not to our tongues merely to talk of, but feet to walk by: Endeavour for it, not that thou maist spread thy own name, but celebrate God. As David promisseth, when he understands the Precepts of God, then he will talk of his wondrous works, he will trumpet the fame of them, and thereby awaken others to enquire after God.

Secondly, When thy end is right set, then thou maist be constant in thy endeavour after it. The Mysteries of Christ are not learnt in a day. *Thou shalt know, if we follow on to know the Lord*, Heb. 6: 3. Some are in a good mood (may be) and they

will look into the Bible, and read a Chapter or two, and away they go for a week, and never practise it more; like some young Boys if at School one day, truant all the week after: is it any wonder such thrive not in knowledge? It is a good speech of Bernard, *Tantum distat studium a lectione, quantum amicitia ab hospitio, socialis affectio a fornicata salutatione.* The study of the Word, and the reading of it, differs as much, as the friendship of such who every day converse lovingly together, doth from the acquaintance one hath with a stranger at an Inn, or whom he salutes as he passeth by in the Street. If you will get knowledge indeed, you must not only salute the Word now and then, but walk with it, and enter into daily converse with it. The three men (who were indeed Angels) that stood by Abraham, as he sat at his Tent-door, were reserved, and strange, till Abraham invited them into his Tent, and entertain'd them friendly; and then Christ, who was one among them (as appears by the Name *Jehovah* given him in several Verses, and also by what he promised he would do for *Sarah*, *vers. 16.* not what God would do, which if a created Angel he would) begins to discover himself to Abraham, and reveal his secrets to him. That soul above others shall be acquainted with the secrets of God in his Word, that doth not slightly read the Word, and as it were complement with it at his Tent-door, but desires more intimacy with it, and therefore entertains it within his soul by frequent meditating of it. *David* compares the Word for sweetness to the honey and the honey-comb. Indeed it is so full, that at first reading some sweetness will now and then drop from it, but he that doth not press it by meditation, leaves the most behind.

Thirdly, Be sure thou takest the right order and method. Arts and Sciences have their Rudiments, and also their more abstruse and deep notions; and sure the right end to begin at, is first to learn the Principles: He (we say) is not like to make a good Scholar in the University, that never was a good Grammar-Scholar. And they cannot be solid Christians, that are not instructed in the grounds of Christianity. The want of this is the cause why many are so unfedfast; first of this way, and then of that, blown like Glasses into any shape, as false Teachers please to breath. Alas they have no Center to draw their Lines from. Think it no disgrace, you who have run into error, and lost yourselves in the Labyrinths of deep points (which now are the great discourse of the weakest professors) to be set back to learn the first Principles of the Oracles of God better; too many are, as *Tertullian* saith in another case, *pudoris magis memores quam salutis*, more tender of their reputation than their salvation, who are more ashamed to be thought ignorant, than careful to have it cured.

Fifthly, If thou wouldst attain to divine knowledge, wait on the Ministry of the Word. As for those who neglect this, and come not where the Word is preach'd, they do like one that should turn his back on the Sun, that he may see it; if thou wouldst know God, come where he hath appointed thee to learn. Indeed, where the means is not,

God hath extraordinary ways; as a Father, if no School in Town, will teach his Child at home; but if there be a publick School, thither he sends him. *God makes manifest (saith Paul) the favour of his knowledge by us in every place, 2 Cor. 2. 14.* Let men talk of the Spirit what they please: He will at last be found a quencher of the Spirit, that is a despiser of Prophecy, they both stand close together, *1 Thes. 5. 19, 20. Quench not the Spirit, Despise not prophesying.* But it is not enough to sit under the means; woful experience teacheth us this, there are some no Sun will tan, they keep their own complexion under the most shining and burning light of the Word preached, as ignorant and prophane as those that never saw Gospel-day; and therefore if thou wilt receive any spiritual advantage by the Word, take heed how thou hearst.

First, Look thou beest a wakeful Hearer. ^{hearing} Is it any wonder he should go away from the Sermon no wiser than he came, that sleeps the greatest part of it away, or hears betwixt sleeping and waking? It must be in a dream sure, if God reveals any thing of his mind to him. So indeed God did to the Fathers of old, but it was not as they prophaneley slept under an Ordinance. O take heed of such Irreverence. He that composeth himself to sleep (as some do) at such a time, or he that is not humbled for it, and that deeply, both of them betray a base and low esteem they have of the Ordinance. Surely thou thinkest but meanly of what is delivered, if it will not keep thee awake; yea, of God himself, whose message it is. See how thou art reproved by the awful carriage of a Heathen, and that a King; *Ehud* did but say to *Eglon*, *I have a message from God unto thee*, and he arose out of his seat, *Judg. 3. 20.* And thou clappst down on thy seat to sleep: O how darest thou put such an affront upon the great God? How oft did you fall asleep at dinner, or telling your Money? And is not the Word of God worth more than these? I should wonder if such Sermon-sleepers do dream of anything but Hell-fire. 'Tis dangerous you know to fall asleep with a Candle burning by our side; some have been so burnt in their beds: but more dangerous to sleep while the Candle of the Word is shining so near us. What if you should sink down dead like *Eurychius*? here is no *Paul* to raise you, as he had; and that you shall not, where is your security?

Secondly, Thou must be an attentive Hearer. He that is awake, but wanders with his eye or heart, what doth he but sleep with his eyes open? It were as good the servant should be asleep in his bed, as when up not to mind his Masters business. When God intends a soul good by the Word, he draws such a one to listen and hearken heedfully to what is delivered; as we see in *Lydia*, who 'tis said) attended unto the things which were spoken of *Paul*. And those, *Luke 19. 48. The people were attentive to hear him.* They did hang on him as you shall see Bees on some sweet flower, or as young Birds on the Bills of their Dams as they feed them, that is, the soul which shall get light and life by the Word. *Hear, ye Children, and attend to know understanding,*

x Attend preaching

Prepare thy mind to hear
 ing, Prov. 4. 1. Labour therefore in hearing the Word to fix thy quick-silver mind, and set thy self to hear, as 'tis said *Jehoshaphat* did to pray, and that thou mayest, before thou goest, get thy heart into some deep sense of thy spiritual wants, especially of thy ignorance of the things of God, and thy deplored condition by reason of it; till the heart be touch'd, the mind will not be fixed. Therefore you may observe, 'tis said, *God opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended, Act. 16. 14.* The Mind goes of the Wills errand; we spend our thoughts upon what our hearts propose. If the heart hath no sense of its ignorance, or no desires after God, no wonder such a one listens not what the Preacher saith, his heart sends his mind another way. *They sit before thee as my people* (saith God) *but their heart goeth after their covetousness*: They do not come out of such an intent or desire to hear for any good to their souls, then they would apply themselves wholly to the work; no, it is their covetousness hath their hearts; and therefore as some idle servant, when he hath waited on his master, brought him to his Pew, then he goes out to his good-fellows at the Ale-house, and comes no more till Sermon be almost done; so do the thoughts of most when they go to the Ordinance, they slip out in the street, market, or shop, you may find them any where but about the duty before them, and all because these have their hearts more than God and his Word.

Thirdly, Thou must be a retentive hearer, without this the work will ever be to begin again. Truths to a forgetful hearer are as a seal set on water, the impression lasts no longer than the seal is on; the Sermon once done, and all is undone; be therefore very careful to fasten what thou hearest on thy memory, which that thou mayest do,

First, Receive the truth in the love of it. An affectionate hearer will not be a forgetful hearer. Love helps the memory; *Can a woman forget her child, or a maid her ornaments, or a Bride her attire?* No, they love them too well: Were the truths of God thus precious to thee, thou wouldest with *David* think of them day and night. Even when the Christian through weakness of memory cannot re-

member the very words he hears, to repeat them; yet, then he keeps the power and favour of them in his spirit, as when sugar is dissolv'd in Wine, you cannot see it, but you may taste it; what meat is eaten and digested, it is not to be found as it was received, but the man is cheered and strengthened by it, more able to walk and work than before, by which you may know it is not lost: so you may taste the truths the Christian heard, in his spirit, see them in his life. Perhaps if you ask him: what the particulars were the Minister had about faith, mortification, repentance, and the like, he cannot tell you; yet this you may find, his heart is more broken for sin, more enabled to rely on the Promises, and now weaned from the world. As that good woman answered one, that coming from Sermon, ask'd her what she remembered of the Sermon? said, She could not at present recall much, but she heard that which should make her reform some things as soon as she came home.

Secondly, Meditate on what thou hearest; by this *David* got more wisdom than his teachers. Observe what truth, what Scripture is cleared to thee in the Sermon more than before, take some time in secret to converse with it, and make it thereby familiar to thy understanding. Meditation to the Sermon, is what the harrow is to the seed, it covers those truths which else might have been pickt or walst away. I am afraid there are many proofs turned down at a Sermon, that are hardly turned up, and lookt on any more when the Sermon is done; and if so, you make others believe you are greater traders for your soul than you are indeed; as if one should come to a shop and lay by a great deal of rich ware, and when he hath done, goes away and never calls for it. O take heed of such doings. The hypocrite cheats himself worst at last.

Thirdly, Discharge thy memory of what is sinful. We wipe our table-book, and deface what is there scribbled, before we can write new. There is such a contrariety betwixt the truths of God and all that is frothy and sinful, that one puts out the other; if you would retain the one, you must let the other go.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Spirituality of the Devils nature, and their extream wickedness.

Against Spiritual wickedness.

THESE words are the fourth Branch in the Description, *Spiritual wickednesses*; and our contest or combat with them as such, express'd by the adverbative particle [*Against*] in the Greek, *κατὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς ανομίας* word for word; *Against the spirituals of wickedness*, which is, as say some, *against wicked spirits*; that is true, but not all.

conceive with many Interpreters, not only the spiritual nature of the Devil, and the wickedness thereof to be intended, but also, yea, chiefly, the nature and kind of those sins, which these wicked spirits do most usually and vigorously provoke the Saints unto, and they are the spirituals of wickedness, not those gross fleshy sins, which the herd

of beastly sinners like swine wallow in, but sin spiritualized, and this, because it is not *visibilia*, but *invisibilia*, not spirits, but spirituals. The words present us with these three doctrinal Conclusions.

First, The Devils are spirits.

Secondly, The Devils are spirits extremely wicked.

Thirdly, These wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual wickednesses. First; of the first.

SECT. I.

First, They are spirits. Spirit is a word of various acception in Scripture. Amongst other used often to set forth the essence and nature of Angels good and evil, both which are called spirits. The holy Angels, *Heb. 1. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits?* The evil, *There came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him, 1 King. 22. 21.* That spirit was a Devil. How oft is the Devil call'd the unclean spirit, foul spirit, lying spirit, &c. Sin did not alter their substance, for then, as one saith well, that nature and substance which transgress'd could not be punished.

First, The Devil is a spirit, that is, his essence is immaterial and simple, not compounded (as corporal beings are) of matter and form: *Haild and see me* (saith Christ to his Disciples that thought they had seen a spirit) *a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, Luke 24. 39.* If they were not thus immaterial, how could they enter into bodies and possess them, as the Scripture tells us they have, even a legion into one man? *Luk. 8. 30.* one body cannot thus enter into another.

Secondly, The Devils are spiritual substances, not qualities, or evil motions arising from us, as some have absurdly conceived. So the Sadducees, and others following them, deny any such being, as Angel good or evil; but this is so fond a conceit, that we must both forfeit our reason, and deny the Scriptures to maintain it, where we find their creation related, *Col. 1. 18.* the fall of some from their first estate, *Jude 6.* and the standing of others called the Elect Angels; The happiness of the one, who behold Gods face; and their employment, are sent out to attend on the Saints as servants on their Masters heirs, *Heb. 1.* The misery of the other, reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; and their present work, which is to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men, as far as they are permitted; all which shew their substance plain enough. But so immerst is sorry man in flesh, that he will not easily believe what he sees not with his fleshly eyes; upon the same account we may deny the being of God himself, because invisible.

Thirdly, They are entire spiritual substances, which have every one proper existence: and thus they are distinguish'd from the souls of men, which are made to subsist in a humane body; and together with it to make one perfect man: so that the soul, though when separated from the body it doth exist, yet hath it a tendency to union with its body again.

Fourthly, They are, though entire spiritual substances, yet finite, being but creatures. God only is the uncreated, infinite, and absolutely simple Spirit, yea, Father of all other spirits.

Now from this spiritual nature of the Devil, we may further see what a dreadful enemy we have to grapple with.

First, As spirits they are of vast intellectual abilities. Sorry man, while in this dark prison of the body, hath not light enough to know what Angelical perfections are; that they excel in knowledge all other creatures we know, because as spirits they come nearest by creation to the nature of God that made them; the Heavens are not lifted higher from the Earth, than Angels by knowledge from man, while on Earth. Man by art hath learnt to take the height of the Stars of Heaven, but where is he that can tell how far in knowledge Angels exceed Man? 'Tis true, they have lost much of that knowledge they had, even all their knowledge as holy Angels, what now they know of God hath lost its favour, and they have no power to use it for their own good. What *Jude* saith of wicked men, may be said of them, *What they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves.* They know the holiness of God, but love him not for it, as the Elect Angels do; and themselves by creation did. They know the evil of sin, and love it not the less, but though they are such fools for themselves, yet have subtilty too much for all the Saints on earth, if we had not a God to play our game for us.

Secondly, As spirits they are invisible, and their approaches also. They come, and you see not your enemy. Indeed this makes him so little feared by the ignorant world, whereas it is his greatest advantage if rightly weighed. O, if men have an apparition of the Devil, or hear a noise in the night, they cry, The Devil, the Devil, and are ready to run out of their wits for fear; but they carry him in their hearts, and walk all the day long in his company, and fear him not. When thy proud heart is clambing up to the pinnacle of honour in thy ambitious thoughts, who sets thee there but the Devil? When thy adulterous heart is big with all manner of uncleanness and filthiness, who but Satan hath been there, begetting these brats on thy whorish spirit? When thou art raging in thy passion, throwing burning coals of wrath and fury about with thy enflamed tongue, where was it set on fire but of Hell? When thou art hurried like the swine into the precipice, and even choakt with thy own drunken vomit, who but the Devil rides thee?

Thirdly, As spirits they are immortal. Of other enemies you may hear news at last that they are dead which fought thy life, as the Angels told *Joseph of Herod.* Persecuting men walk a turn or two upon the stage, and are call'd off by death, and there is an end of all their plots; but Devils dye not, they will hunt thee to thy grave, and when thou dyest they will meet thee in another world, to accuse and torment thee there also.

Fourthly, They are unwearied in their motions. When the fight is over among men, the Conqueror must sit down and breathe, and so loseth the chase, because

because not able to pursue it in time. Yea, some have given over their Empires, as glutted with the blood of men, and weary of the work, when they cannot have their will as they desired. Thus *Dioctesian*, because he saw he did but mow a Meadow that grew the thicker for the cutting down (as *Tertullian* speaks of the Christians martyred) he throws away his Scepter in a Pet. *Charles* the fifth did the like (some say) upon the same reason, because he could not root out the *Lutherans*. But the Devils spirit is never cowed, nor he weary of doing mischief, though he hath never stood still since first he began his walk to and fro the world. O what would become of us if a God were not at our back, who is infinitely more the Devils odds than he ours!

SECT. II.

Secondly, They are wicked spirits; wicked in the abstract, as in the Text, and call'd by way of eminency in sin, *The wicked one*, Mat. 13. 19. As God is call'd the holy One, because *none holy as the Lord*: So, the Devil the wicked one, because he is a none-such in sin. In a few particulars let us endeavour to take the height of the Devils sin, and the rather, that we may judge of the degrees of sins, and sinners among the Sons of men: the nearer God in holiness, the more holy; the liker the Devil, the more wicked.

First, These Apostate Angels are the inventors of sin; the first that sounded the Trumpet of Rebellion against their Maker, and led the Dance to all that sin which since hath filled the World. Now what tongue can accent this sin to its fall? For such a noble Creature whom God hath set on the top, as it were, of all the Creation, nearest to himself, from whom God hath kept nothing but his own royal Diadem; for this Peer and Favourite of the Court, without any cause or sollicitation from any other, to make this bold and blasphemous attempt to snatch at Gods own Crown, this paints the Devil blacker than the thoughts of men and Angels can conceive. He is call'd *the Father of Lies*, as those who found out any Art, are call'd the Father of it. *Jubal the Father of all such as handle the Harp and Organ*; he invented Musick. And this is a dreadful aggravation, because they sinned without a Tempter. And though man is not in such a degree capable of this aggravation, yet some men sin after the very similitude of the Devils transgression in this respect, who as *St. Paul*, *Rom. 1. 30.* styles them, *are inventors of evil things*. Indeed sin is an old Trade, found out to our hand; but as in other Trades and Arts, some famous men arise, who add to the inventions of others, and make Trades and Arts (as it were) new; so there are ever some infamous in their generation, that make old sins new, by superadding to the wickedness of others. Uncleaness is an old sin from the beginning, but the *Sodomites* will be filthy in a new way; and therefore it carries their name to this day. Some invent new Errors, others new Oaths, such as are of their own coining, hot out of the Mint, they scorn to swear after the old fashion. Others new devices of persecuting, as *Jubi-*

an had a way by himself different from all before him; and to the end of the World every Age will exceed other in the degrees of sinning. *Ishmael* and the mockers of the old World, were but Children and Bunglers to the Scoffers and cruel mockers of the last time. Well, take heed of shewing thy wit in inventing new sins, lest thou stir up God to invent new punishments. *Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of Iniquity?* Job 31. 3. *Sodom* sinned after a new mode, and God destroys them after a new way, sends Hell from above upon them. Some have invented new Opinions, monstrous Errors, and God hath suited their monstrous Errors with Births as monstrous of their own body.

Secondly, They were not only the inventors of sin, but are still the chief tempters to and promoters of sin in the World, therefore called *the Tempter*; and sin called *the work of the Devil*, whoever commits it; as the House goes by the name of the Master-workman, though he useth his servants hands to build it. O take heed of soliciting others to sin; thou takest the Devils Office (as I may say) out of his hand; let him do it himself if he will, make not thy self so like him. To tempt another, is worse than to sin thy self. It speaks sin to be of great growth in that man, that doth it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and Flowers shed not their Seed till ripe, Creatures propagate not till of stature and age. What do those that tempt others, but diffuse their wicked Opinions and Practices, and as it were, raise up seed to the Devil, thereby to keep up the name of their infernal Father in the World? This shews sin is mighty in them indeed. Many a man though so cruel to his own soul as to be drunk or swear, yet will not like this in a Child or Servant; what are they then but Devils incarnate, who teach their Children the Devils Catechism, to swear and lie, drink and drab? If you meet such, be not afraid to call them (as *Paul* did *Elymas*, when he would have perverted the Deputy) Children of the Devil, full of all subtilty and mischief, and Enemies of all Righteousness. O do you not know what you do, when you tempt? I'll tell you, you do that which you cannot undo by your own Repentance; thou poysonest one with Error, iniriatest another in the Devils School, (Ale-house I mean) but afterwards, may be, thou seest thy mistake, and recantest thy Error, thy Folly, and givest over thy Drunken Trade; art thou sure now to rectify and convert them with thy self? Alas poor Creatures! this is out of thy power, they, may be, will say, as he (though he did it upon a better account) that was solicited to turn back to Popery, by him who had before perswaded him to renounce the same; *You have given me one turn, but shall not give me another.* And what a grief to thy spirit will it be, to see these going to Hell on thy Errand, and thou not able to call them back? thou maist cry out as *Lamech*, *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* Nay, when thou art asleep in thy Grave, he whom thou seducedst, may have drawn in others, and thy name may be quoted to commend the opinion and practice to others; by which (as 'tis said, though

though in another sense, *Abel being dead, yet speaks* thou maist, though dead, sin in those that are alive, generation after generation. A little spark kindled by the Error of one, hath cost the pains of many Ages to quench it; and when thought to be out, hath broke forth again.

Thirdly, They are not barely wicked, but maliciously wicked. The Devil hath his name *malicious*, to denote his spiteful nature, his desire to vex and mischief others. When he draws souls to sin, it is not because he tastes any sweetness, or finds any profit therein: he hath too much light to have any joy or peace in sin; he knows his doom, and trembles at the thought of it, and yet his spiteful nature makes him vehemently desire, and incessantly endeavour the damnation of souls. As you shall see a mad Dog run after a flock of sheep, kill one, then another, and when dead, not able to eat of their flesh, but kills to kill: So Satan is carried out with a boundless Rage against man, especially the Saints, he would not, if he could, leave one of Christs flock alive; such is the height of his malice against God, whom he hates with a perfect hatred, and because he cannot reach him with a direct blow, therefore he strikes him at second hand through his Saints; that wicked arm which reacheth not to God, is extended against these excellent on the earth, well knowing the life of God is in a manner bound up in theirs. God cannot out-live his honour, and his honour speeds as his mercy is exalted or depressed; this being the Attribute God means to honour in their salvation so highly, and therefore maligned above the rest by Satan. And this is the worst that can be said of these wicked spirits, that they maliciously spite God, and in God the glory of his Mercy.

Use 1. First, This may help us to conceive more fully what the desperate wickedness of mans nature is, which is so hard to be known, because it can never be seen at once, it being a Fountain whose immensity consists not in the stream of actual sin, (that is visible, and may seem little) but in the spring that incessantly feeds this; but here is a Glass that will give us the shape of our hearts truly like themselves. Seest thou the monstrous pitch and height of wickedness that is in the Devil, all this there is in the heart of every man, there is no less wickedness potentially in the tamest sinner on earth, than in the Devils themselves, and that one day thou, whoever thou art, wilt shew to purpose, if God prevent thee not by his renewing Grace; thou art not yet fledg'd, thy wings are not grown to make thee a flying Dragon, but thou art of the same brood, the seed of this Serpent is in thee, and the Devil begets a Child like himself; thou yet stand'st in a soil not so proper for the ripening of sin, which will not come to its fullness till transplanted unto Hell. Thou who art here so maidenly and modest, as to blush at some sins out of shame, and forbear the acting of others out of fear, when there thou shalt see thy case as desperate as the Devil doth his, then thou wilt spit out thy blasphemies with which thy nature is flust, with the same malice that he doth. The *Indians* have a conceit, that when they die, they shall be transformed into the deform-

ed likeness of the Devil, therefore in their Language they have the same word for a dead man and the Devil; sin makes the wicked like him before they come there, but indeed they will come to their countenance more fully there, when those flames shall wash off that paint which here hides their complexion. The Saints in Heaven shall be like the Angels in their alacrity, love and constancy to serve God, and the damned like the Devils in sin as well as punishment. This one consideration might be of excellent use to unbottom a sinner, and abase him, so as never to have high thought of himself. It is easie to run down a person whose life is wicked, and convince him of the evil of his actions, and make him confess what he doth is evil; but here is the Thicket we lose him in; he will say, 'tis true, I am overseen, I do what I should not, God forgive me; but my heart is good. Thy heart good, (sinner) and so is the Devils; his nature is wicked, and thine as bad as his. These Pimples in thy face shew the heat of thy corrupt nature within, and without Gospel-Physick, the blood of Christ applied to thee, thou wilt die a Leper; none but Christ can give thee a new heart, till which, thou wilt every day grow worse and worse. Sin is an hereditary disease, that encreaseth with age. A young sinner will be an old Devil.

Use 2. Again, It would be of use to the Saints, especially those in whom God by his timely call fore-stall'd the Devils Market; as sometimes the Spirit of God takes sin in its Quarters before it comes into the Field, in the sins of youth: now such a one finding not those daring sins committed by him, that others have been left unto, may possibly not be affected so with his own sin, or Gods mercy. O let such a one behold here the wickedness of his heart in this Glass of the Devils nature, and he will see himself as great a Debtor to the Mercy of God as *Manasse*, or the worst of sinners, as in pardoning, so in preventing the same cursed nature with theirs, before it gave fire on God with those bloody sins they committed. That thou didst not act such outrageous sins, thou art beholden to Gods gracious surprize, and not the goodness of thy nature which hath the Devils stamp on it, for which God might have crush'd thee, as we do the brood of Serpents before they sting, knowing what they will do in time. Who will say that *Faux* suffered unjustly, because the Parliament was not blown up? it was enough that the Materials for that Massacre were provided, and he taken there with Match and Fire about him ready to lay the Train; and canst thou say when God first took hold on thee, that thou hadst not those weapons of Rebellion about thee, a nature fully charged with enmity against God, which in time would have made its own report of what for present lay like unfired Powder silent in thy bosom: O Christian, think of this, and be humbled for thy villainous nature, and say, Blessed be God that sent his Spirit and Grace so timely to stay thy hand (as *Abigail* to *David*) while thy nature meditated nothing but War against God and his Laws.

Again, Thirdly, Are the Devils so wickedly malicious?

✓ malicious against God himself? O Sirs, take the right notion of sin, and you will hate it. The Reason why we are so easily perswaded to sin, is, because we understand not the bottom of his design in drawing a creature to sin. It is with men in sinning, as it is with Armies in fighting; Captains beat their Drums for Volunteers, and promise all that list, pay and plunder, and this makes them come treading in; but few consider what the ground of the War is, against whom, or for what. Satan enticeth to sin, and gives Golden promises what they shall have in his service, with which silly souls are won; but how few ask their souls, whom do I sin against? what is the Devils design in drawing me to sin? Shall I tell thee? Dost thou think 'tis thy pleasure or profit he desires in thy sinning? Alas, he means nothing less, he hath greater plots in his head than so. He hath

by his Apostasie proclaimed War against God, and he brings thee by sinning to espouse his quarrel, and to jeopard the life of thy soul in defence of his pride and lust; which that he may do, he cares no more for the damnation of thy soul, than the *Great Turk* doth to see a company of his slaves cut off for the carrying on of his delign in a Siege: and darest thou venture to go into the field upon his quarrel against God? O Earth, tremble thou at the presence of the Lord. This bloody *Joab* sets thee where never any came off alive. O stand not where Gods Bullets flie, throw down thy arms, or thou art a dead man. Whatever others do, O ye Saints, abhor the thoughts of sinning willingly, which when you do, you help the Devil against God; and what more unnatural, than for a Child to be seen in Arms against his Father?

CHAP. VII.

Of Satans Plot to defile the Christians spirit with heart-sins.

The second Point follows.

Distr. 2. **T**Hat these wicked spirits do chiefly annoy the Saints with, and provoke them to spiritual sins. Sinners may be called spiritual upon a double account, either from the Subject wherein they are acted, or from the Object about which they are conversant.

First, In regard of the Subject; when the spirit or heart is the stage whereon sin is acted, this is a spiritual sin; such are all impure thoughts, vile affections and desires; though the Object be fleshly lust, yet are spiritual sins, because they are purely acts of the soul and spirit, and break not forth unto the outward man.

Secondly, In regard of the Object, when that is spiritual, and not carnal, such as are Idolatry, Error, spiritual Pride, Unbelief, &c. both which *Paul* calls the *filthiness of the spirit*, and distinguisheth them from *filthiness of the flesh*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

SECT. I.

¶ First, of the first, Satan labours what he can to provoke the Christian to heart-sins, to stir up and foment these inward motions of sin in the Christians bosom; hence it is, he can go about no Duty but these (his Imps. I may call them) haunt him, one motion or other darts in to interrupt him, as *Paul* tells us of himself, *When he would do good, evil was present with him*; if a Christian should turn back when ever these cross the way of him, he should never go on his journey to Heaven. It is the chief Game the Devil hath left to play against the Children of God; now his field-army is bro-

ken, and his commanding power taken away which he had over them, to come out of these his holds where he lies skulking, and fall upon their Rear with these suggestions. He knows his credit now is not so great with the Soul, as when it was his slave; then no drudgery work so base, that it would not do at his command: but now the Soul is out of his bondage, and he must not think to command anothers Servant as his own: No, all he can do, is to watch the fittest season (when the Christian least suspects) and then to present some sinful motion handsomely dressed up to the eye of the soul, that the Christian may (before he is aware) take this Brat up, and handle it in his thoughts, till at last he makes it his own by embracing it; and this he knows will defile the Soul: and may be this Boy sent in at the window may open the door to let in a greater Thief; or if he should not so prevail, yet the guilt of these heart-sins, yea, their very neighbourhood will be a sad vexation to a gracious heart, whose nature is so pure that it abhors all filthiness (so that to be haunted with such motions, is, as if a living man should be chain'd to a stinking Carcase, that whereever he goes, he must draw that after him) and whose love is so dear to Christ, that it cannot bear the company of those thoughts without amazement and horror, which are so contrary and abusive to his Beloved. This makes Satan so desirous to be ever raking in the unregenerate part, that as a dunghil stir'd, it may offend them both with the noisom streams which arise from it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Use 1. First, Let this be for tryal of thy spiritual state. What entertainment finds Satan when he comes with these spirituals of wickedness, and sollicitates thee to dwell on them? canst thou dispense with the filthiness of thy spirit, so thy hands be clean? Or dost thou wrestle against these heart-sins as well as others? I do not ask whether such Guests come within thy door; for the worst of sins may be found in the motions of them, not only passing by the door of a Christian, but looking in also; as holy motions may be found stirring in the bosom of wicked men; But I ask thee, whether thou canst find in thy heart to lodge these Guests, and bid them welcome. 'Tis like thou wouldst not be seen to walk in the street with such company, not lead a Whore by the hand through the Town, not violently break open thy Neighbours house to murder or rob him; but canst thou not under thy own Roof, in the withdrawing Room of thy Soul, let thy thoughts hold up an unclean lust, while thy heart commits speculative folly with it? Canst thou not draw thy Neighbour into thy Den, and there rend him limb from limb by thy malice, and thy heart not so much as cry murder, murder? In a word, Canst thou hide any one sin in the vance roof of thy heart, there to save the life of it when enquired after by the Word and Spirit, as *Rahab* hid the Spies, and sent the King of *Jericho's* messengers to pursue them, as if they had been gone? Perhaps thou canst say, The Adulterer, the murderer is not here, thou hast sent these sins away long ago, and all this while thou hidest the love of them in thy Soul; know it, or thou shalt another day know it to thy cost, thou art stark naught. If there were a spark of the life of God or the love of Christ in thy bosome, though thou couldst not hinder such motions in thy soul, yet thou wouldst not conceal them, much less nourish them in thy bosom; when over-powered by them thou wouldst call in help from Heaven against these destroyers of thy soul.

Use 2. Secondly, shew your loyalty, O ye Saints, to God by a vigorous resistance of, and wrestling against these spirituals of wickedness. First, Consider, Christian, heart-sins are sins as well as any; *The thought of foolishness is sin*, Prov. 24. 9. Mercury is poyson in the water distill'd, as well as in the gross body. Uncleanliness, Covetousness, Murder, are such in the heart as well as in the outward; every point of Hell, is Hell. Secondly, consider, thy spirit is the seat of the Holy Spirit. He takes up the whole heart for his lodgings, and 'tis time for him to be gone when he sees his house let over his head. Defile not thy spirit, till thou art weary of his company. Thirdly, Consider, there may be more wickedness in a sin of the heart, than of the hand and outward man; for the aggravation of these is taken from the behaviour of the heart in the act. The more of the heart and spirit is let out, the more malignity is let in to any sinful act. *To back-slide in heart*, is more than to back-slide; 'tis the comfort of a poor soul when tempted and troubled for his relapses; that though his foot slides

back, yet his heart turns not back, but faceth Heaven and Christ at the same time; so to erre in the heart, is worse than to have an error in the head; therefore God aggravates *Israels* sin with this, *They do always erre in their hearts*, Heb. 3. 10. Their hearts run them upon the error, they liked Idolatry, and so were soon made to believe what pleased them best. As on the contrary, the more of the heart and spirit is in any holy service, the more real goodness there is in it, though it fall short of others in the outward expression. The Widows two mites surpassed all the rest, Christ himself being Judge; so in sin, though the internal acts of sin in thoughts and affections seem light upon mans balance if compared with outward act, yet these may be so circumstantiated that they may exceed the other in Gods account; *Peter* lays the accent of *Magnus* his sin on the wicked thought, which his words betrayed to be in his heart; *Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven*, Acts 8. 22. *Sauls* sin in sparing *Agag*, and leaving the best of the sheep and oxen, which he was commanded to destroy, was materially a far less sin than *Dauids* adultery and murder, yet it is made equal with a greater than both, even witchcraft it self, 1 Sam. 15. 23. and whence receiv'd his sin such a dye, but from the wickedness of his heart, that was worse than *Dauids* when deepest in the temptation? Fourthly, if Satan get into thy spirit and defile it, O how hard wilt thou find it to stay there? Thou hast already sipt of his broth, and now art more likely to be overcome at last to sit down and make thy full meal of that, which by tasting hath vitiated thy palate already. It were strange, if while thou art musing and thy heart hot with the thoughts of lust, the fire should not break forth at thy lips, or worse.

Quest. But what help have we against this sort of Satans temptations?

Answ. I suppose thee a Christian that makest this question; and if thou dost it in the plainness of thy heart, it proves thee one. Who besides will, or can desire in earnest, to be eased of these guests? even when a carnal heart prays for deliverance from them, he would be loth his Prayer should be heard. *Not yet Lord*, the heart of such a one cries, as *Augustine* *fin* confessed of himself. Sin is as truly the offspring of the soul, as children are of our bodies, and it finds as much favour in our eyes, yea more, for the sinner can slay a son to save a sin alive, *Micah* 6. 7. and of all sins none are more made on than these heart-sins.

First, because they are the first-born of the sinful heart, and the chiefest strength of the soul is laid out upon them.

Secondly, because the heart hath more scope in them than in outward acts. The proud man is staked down oft to a short state, and cannot ruffle it in the world, and appear to others in that pomp he would; but within his own bosom he can set up a stage, and in his own foolish heart present himself as great a Prince as he pleaseth. The malicious can kill in his desires as many in a few minutes, as the Angel smote in a night of *Senacheribs* host. *Nero* thus could slay all *Rome* on the block at once.

Thirdly, these sins stay with the soul when the other leave it; when the sinner hath crippled his body with drunkenness and filthiness, and proves *miles emeritus*, cannot follow the Devils camp any longer in those ways; then these cursed lusts will entertain the sinner with stories of his old pranks and pleasures. In a word, these inward lusts of the heart have nothing but the conscience of a Deity to quell them. Other sins put the sinner to shame before men, and as some that believed on Christ, durst not confess him openly, because they loved the praise of men, so there are sinners who are kept from vouching their lusts openly, for the same tenderness to their reputation; but here is no fear of that, if they can but forget that Heaven sees them, or persuade themselves there is no danger from thence; the coast then is clear, they may be as wicked as they please. These make inward sins so hugg'd and embraced. If thou therefore canst find thy heart set against these, I may venture to call thee a Christian, and for thy help against them,

First, be earnest with God in prayer to move and order thy heart in its thoughts and desires. If the tongue be such an unruly thing that few can tame; O what is the heart, where such a multitude of thoughts are flying forth as thick as Bees from the Hive, and sparks from the furnace! It is not in man, not in the holiest on earth to do this without Divine assistance. Therefore we find *David* so often crying out in this respect to order his steps in his Word, to unite his heart to his fear, to incline his heart to his testimonies. As a servant, when the child he tends is troublesome, and will not be ruled by him, calls out to the Father to come to him, who no sooner speaks but all is whist with him: No doubt holy *David* found his heart beyond his skill or power, that makes him so oft do its errand to God. Indeed God hath promised thus much to his children, to order their steps for them, *Psalms* 37. 22. only he looks they should bring their hearts to him for that end. *Commit thy work to the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*, *Prov.* 16. 3. or ordered. Art thou setting thy face towards an Ordinance, where thou art sure to meet Satan, who will be disturbing thee with worldly thoughts, and may be worse? let God know from thy mouth whither thou art going, and what thy fears are. Never doth the soul march in so goodly order, as when it puts it self under the conduct of God.

Secondly, Set a strong guard about thy outward senses: these are Satans landing places, especially the eye and the ear. Take heed what thou importest at these; vain discourse seldom passeth without leaving some tincture upon the heart, as unwholesome air inclines to putrefaction, things sweet in themselves: so unfavoury discourse to corrupt the mind that is pure. Look thou breatheest therefore in a clear air. And for thy eye, let it not wander, wanton objects cause wanton thoughts. *Job* knew his eye and his thoughts were like to go together, and therefore to secure one, he covenants with the other, *Job* 31. 1.

Thirdly, often reflect upon thy self in a day, and observe what company is with thy heart. A

careful Master will ever and anon be looking into his work-house, and see what his servants are doing, and a wise Christian should do the same. We may know by the noise in the School, the Master is not there: much of the mis-rule in our bottoms arises from the neglect of visiting our hearts. Now when thou art parlying with thy soul, make this threefold enquiry.

First, whether that which thy heart is thinking on be good or evil. If evil and wicked, such as are proud, unclean, distrustful thoughts, shew thy abhorrency of them, and chide thy soul sharply for so much as holding conference with them, of which nought can come, but dishonour to God, and mischief to thy own soul; and stir up thy heart to mourn for the evil neighbourhood of them, and by this thou shalt give a testimony of thy faithfulness to God. When *David* mourn'd for *Abner*, all *Israel*'s said *understood that day, that it was not of the King to slay Abner*: Thy mourning for them will shew these thoughts are not so much of thee, as of Satan.

Secondly, if they be not broadly wicked, enquire whether they be not empty, frothy, vain imaginations, that have no subserviency to the glory of God, thy own good, or others; and if so, leave not till thou hast made thy self apprehensive of Satans design on thee in them, though such are not for thy purpose, yet they are for his, they serve his turn to keep thee from better. All the water is lost that runs beside the Mill, and all thy thoughts are waste which help thee not to do Gods work withal in thy general or particular calling. The Bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can be sucked, neither should the Christian. Why fittest thou here idle (thou shouldest say to thy soul) when thou hast so much to do for God and thy soul, and so little time to dispatch it in?

Thirdly, If thou findest they are good for matter thy heart is busied about, then enquire whether they be good for time and manner, which being wanting they degenerate.

First, for the season; that is good fruit which is brought forth in its season. Christ liked the work his mother would have put him upon as well as her self, *John* 2. but his time was not come. Good thoughts and meditations misplaced, are like some interpretations of Scripture, good truths, but bad expositions; they fit not the place they are drawn from, nor these the time. To pray when we should hear, or be musing on the Sermon when we should pray, this is to rob God one way to pay him another.

Secondly, carefully observe the manner. Thy heart may meditate a good matter, and spoil it in the doing. Thou art it may be musing of thy sins, and affecting thy heart into a sense of them, but so, that while thou art stirring up thy sorrow, thou weakenest thy faith on the promise, that is thy sin. He is a bad Chirurgion, that in opening a vein goes so deep that he cuts an artery, and lames the arm, if not kills the man. Or thou art thinking of thy family and providing for that, this thou oughtest to do, and wert worse than an Infidel if thou neglectest, but may be these thoughts are so distracting

straitning and distrustful as if there were no promise, no providence to relieve thee. God takes this ill, because it reflects upon his care of thee; O how near doth our duty here stand to our sin! so much

care is necessary Ballast to the soul; a little more sinks it under the waves of unbelief; like some things very wholesom, but one degree more of hot or cold would make them poyson.

CHAP. VIII.

How Satan labours to corrupt the Christians mind with Error.

THe second sort of spiritual sins are such as are not only acted in the spirit, but are conversant about spiritual Objects proper to the souls nature, that is a Spirit; and not laid out in carnal passions of fleshly lusts, in which the soul acts but as a Panther for the Body, and partakes of their delights only by way of sympathy; for as the soul feels the bodies pains no other way than by sympathy, so neither doth it share in the pleasures of the flesh by any proper taste it hath of them, but only from its near neighbourhood with the body doth sympathize with its joy; but in spiritual wickednesses that corrupt the mind, here the soul moves in its own sphere, with a delight proper to it self; and there are no less of these than the other. There is hardly a fleshly lust, but hath some spiritual sin analogical to it; as they say there is no species of Creatures on the Land, but may be pattern'd in the Sea: Thus the heart of man can produce spiritual sins answering carnal lusts; for Whoredom and Uncleaness of the flesh, there is Idolatry call'd in Scripture spiritual Adultery, from which the Seat of Antichrist is call'd spiritual Sodom; for sensual Drunkenness, there is a Drunkenness of the mind, intoxicating the Judgment with Error, a Drunkenness of the heart in cares and fears, for carnal pride in Beauty, Riches, Honour, there is a spiritual pride of Gifts, Graces, &c. Now Satan in an especial manner assaults the Christian with such as these; it would require a larger Discourse than I can allow, to run over the several kinds of them; I shall of many pick out two or three. As first, Satan labours to corrupt the mind with erroneous Principles; he was at work at the very first plantation of the Gospel, sowing his Darnel, as soon almost as Christ his Wheat, which spring up in pernicious errors, even in the Apostles times, which made them take the weeding-hook into their hands, and, in all their Epistles labour to countermine Satan in this design. Now Satan hath a threefold design in this his endeavour to corrupt the minds of men, especially Professors, with error.

SECT. I.

First, He doth this in despite to God, against whom he cannot vent his malice at a higher rate, than by corrupting his truth, which God hath so highly honoured, *Psal. 138. 2. Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* Every creature bears the Name of God, but in his Word and Truth therein contained 'tis writ at length, and

therefore he is more choice of this, than of all his other works; he cares not much what becomes of the world and all in it, so he keeps his Word, and saves his truth. Ere long we shall see the world on a light flame; the Heavens and earths shall pass away, *but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.* When God will, he can make more such Worlds as this, but he cannot make another Truth, and therefore he will not lose one iota thereof. Satan knowing this, sets all his wits on work to deface this, and disfigure it by unsound Doctrine. The Word is the Glas in which we see God, and seeing him, are changed into his likeness by his Spirit. If this Glas be crackt, then our conceptions we have of God will mis-represent him unto us; whereas the Word in its native clearness sets him out in all his glory unto our eye.

Secondly, He endeavours to draw into this spiritual sin of Error, as the most subtil and effectual means to weaken, if not destroy the power of Godliness in them. The Apostle joyns the Spirit of power and a sound mind together, *2 Tim. 1. 7.* Indeed the power of holiness in practice depends much on the soundness of judgment. Godliness is the Child of truth, and it must be nurs't, if we will have it thrive, with no other milk than of its own Mother. Therefore we are exhorted to *desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow,* *1 Pet. 2. 2. ὁ ἀγαπᾷ τὴν λέξιν,* if this Milk be but a little dash't with error, it is not so nutritive. All error, how innocent soever any may seem (like the Ivy) draws away the strength of the Souls Love from holiness. *Hosea* tells us, Whoredom and Wine take away the heart; now error is spiritual Adultery. *Paul* speaks of his espousing them to Christ: when a person receives an Error, he takes a stranger into Christs Bed, and it is the nature of adulterous Love to take away the Wifes heart from her true Husband, that she delights not in his company so much as of her adulterous Lover: and do we not see it at this day fulfilled? Do not many shew more Zeal in contending for one error, than for many Truths? how strangely are the hearts of many taken off from the ways of God, their Love cooled to the Ordinances and Messengers of Christ? and all this occasioned by some corrupt Principle got into their bosoms, which controuls Christ and his truth, as *Hagar* and her Son did *Sarah* and her Child. Indeed Christ will never enjoy true conjugal love from the Soul, till like *Abraham* he turns these out of doors. Error is not so innocent a thing as many think it; it is as unwholesom food

to the body, that poysons the spirits, and surfeits the whole body, which seldom passeth away and not break out into sores. As the knowledge of Christ carries a soul above the pollution of the world, so error entangles and betrays it to those lusts, whose hands it had escaped.

Thirdly, Satan in drawing a soul into this spiritual sin, hath a design to disturb the peace of the Church, which is rent and shattered when this fire-ship comes among them. *I hear (saith Paul) there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must be heresies,* 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. implying that divisions are the natural issue of heresie. Error cannot well agree with error, except it be against the truth, then indeed (like *Pilate and Herod*) they are easily made friends; but when truth seems to be overcome, and the battel is over with that, then they fall out among themselves; and therefore it is no wonder if it be so troublesome a neighbour to truth. O Sirs, what a sweet silence and peace was there among Christians a dozen years ago! methinks the looking back to those blessed days in this respect, (though they had also another way their troubles, yet not so uncomfortable, because that storm united, this scatters the Saints spirits) is joyous to remember in what unity and love Christians walkt, that the Persecutors of those times might have said, as their Predecessors did of the Saints in primitive times, *See how they love one another*; but now alas they may jeer and say, *See how they that loved so dearly are ready to pluck one anothers throats out!*

SECT. I.

Use. The application of this shall be only in a word of exhortation to all, especially you who bear the name of Christ by a more eminent profession of him. O beware of this soul-infection, this leprosie of the head. I hope you do not think it needless, for 'tis the disease of the times. This Plague is begun, yea, spreads apace; not a flock, a Congregation hardly, that hath not this scab among them. Paul was a Preacher the best of us all may write after, and he presseth this home upon the Saints, yea, in the constant course of his preaching it made a piece of his Sermon, *Acts 20. 30, 31.* he sets us Preachers also on this work: *Take heed to your selves, and to all the flock; for I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter; also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things; therefore watch.* And then he presents his own example, that he hardly made a Sermon for several years, but this was part of it, to warn every one night and day with tears. We need not prophesie what Impostors may come upon the stage, when we go off; there are too many at present above board of this gang, drawing Disciples after them. And if it be our duty to warn you of them, surely 'tis yours to watch, lest you by any of them be led into temptation this hour thereof, wherein Satan is let loose in so great a measure to deceive the Nation. May you not as easily be sowed with this leaven, as the Disciples, whom Christ bids beware? Are you privileged above those famous Churches of *Galatia* and *Corinth*,

many of which were bewitched with false Teachers, and in a manner turned to another Gospel? Is Satan grown Orthodox, or have his Instruments lost their cunning, who hunt for souls? In a word, is there not a sympathy between thy corrupt heart and error? Hast thou not a disposition, which like the *foams* of the Earth, makes it natural for these weeds to grow in thy soil? Seest thou not many prostrated by this enemy, who sate upon the mountain of their faith, and thought it should never have been removed, surely they would have took it ill to have been told, you are the men and women that will decry Sabbaths, which now ye count holy; you will turn Pelagians, who now despise that name; you will despise Prophecy it self, who now seem so much to honour the Prophets; you will throw family duties out of doors, who dare not now go out of doors, till you have prayed there. Yet these, and more than these are come to pass, and doth it not behove thee (Christian) to take heed lest thou fallest also? And that thou mayest not,

First, Make it thy chief care to get a through-change of thy heart. If once the root of the matter be in thee, and thou beest bottom'd by a lively faith on Christ, thou art then safe: I do not say wholly free from all error, but this I am sure, free from ingulphing thy soul in damning error: *They went out from us, (saith Saint John) but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us,* 1 Joh. 2. 29. As if he had said, They had some outward profession, and common work of the Spirit with us, which they have either lost or carried over to the Devils quarters, but they never had the unction of the sanctifying Spirit. By this *ver. 20.* he distinguisheth them, and comforts the sincere ones, who possibly might fear their own fall by their departure: *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* 'Tis one thing to know a truth, and another thing to know it by unction. An hypocrite may do the former, the Saint only the latter. It is this unction which gives the soul the favour of the knowledge of Christ: Those are the fit prey for Impostors, who are enlightened, but not enlivened. Oh it's good to have the heart established with grace; this as an anchor will keep us from being set adrift, and carried about with diverse and strange Doctrines, as the Apostle teacheth us, *Heb. 13. 9.*

Secondly, Ply the work of mortification: Crucifie the flesh daily. Heresie though a spiritual sin, yet by the Apostle reckon'd among the deeds of the flesh, *Gal. 5. 20.* because it is occasioned by fleshly motives, and nourish'd by carnal food and fuel. Never any turn'd Heretick, but flesh was at the bottom; either they served their belly, or a lust of pride; 'twas the way to Court, or secured their estates, and saved their lives, as sometimes the reward of Truth is fire and faggot; some pad or other is in the straw when least seen, and therefore it's no wonder heresies should end in the flesh, which in a manner sprang from it. The rheum in the head ascends in fumes from the stomach, & returns thither, or unto the lungs, which at last fret and ulcerate:

Carnal

Carnal affections first send up their fumes to the understanding, clouding that, yea, bribing it to receive such and such principles for truths, which embraced, fall down into the life, corrupting that with the ulcer of profaneness. So that, Christian, if once thou canst take off thy engagements to the flesh, and become a free-man, so as not to give thy vote to gratifie thy carnal fears or hopes, thou wilt then be a sure friend to truth.

Thirdly, Wait conscionably on the Ministry of the Word. Satan commonly stops the ear from hearing sound Doctrine, before he opens it to embrace corrupt. This is the Method of souls apostatizing from truth, 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. *They shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* Satan like a cunning thief draws the soul out of the road into some lane or corner, and there robs him of the truth. By rejecting of one Ordinance, we deprive our selves of the blessing of all other: Say not that thou prayest to be led into truth; he will not hear thy prayer, if thou turnest thine ear from hearing the Law. He that loves his child, when he sees him play the truant, will whip him to school: If God loves a soul, he will bring him back to the Word with shame and sorrow.

Fourthly, When thou hearest any unusual Doctrine, though never so pleasing, make not up the match hastily with it; have some better testimony of it before you open your heart to it. The Apostle

indeed bids us *entertain strangers*, for some have entertained Angels unawares, Heb. 13. 3. but he would not have us carried about with *strange Doctrine*, v. 9. by this I am sure some have entertained Devils. I confess, 'tis not enough to reject a Doctrine, because strange to us, but ground we have to wait and enquire. Paul marvelled that the *Galatians* were so soon removed from him, who had called them unto the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; they might sure have stayed till they had acquainted Paul with it, and asked his judgment; What, no footer an Impostor come into the Country and open his Pack, but buy all his Ware at first sight! O friends, were it not more wisdom to try such new notions over and over again, to search the Word and our hearts by it, yea, not to trust our own hearts, but call in counsel from others? If your Minister have not so much credit with you, yet the most holy, humble and established Christians you can find. Error is like fish, which must be eaten new, or it will stink. When those dangerous errors sprung up first in *New-England*, O how unsettled were many of the Churches! what an out-cry was made, as if some Mine of Gold had been discovered! But in a while when those errors came to their complexion, and it was perceived whither they were bound, to destroy Churches, Ordinances, and Power of Godliness; then such as feared God, who had stepped aside, returned back with shame and sorrow.

CHAP. IX.

Of Pride of Gifts, and how Satan tempts the Christian thereto.

THE second spiritual wickedness which Satan provokes unto, especially the Saint, is spiritual pride. This was the sin made him of a blessed Angel, a cursed Devil; and as it was his personal sin, so he chiefly labours to derive it to the sons of men; and he so far prevailed on our first Parents, that ever since this sin hath and doth claim a kind of regency in the heart, making use both of bad and good to draw her chariot. First, of evil; Pride enters into the labours of other sins, they do but work to make her brave, as Subjects to uphold the state and grandeur of their Prince. Thus you shall see some drudge and droil, cheat, cozen, oppress; and what mean they? O 'tis to get an estate to maintain their pride. Others fawn and flatter, lie, dissemble, and for what? to help Pride up some mount of honour. Again, it maketh use of that which is good; it can work with Gods own tools, his Ordinances, by which the holy Spirit advanceth his Kingdom of grace in the hearts of his Saints. These often are prostituted to pride. A man may be very zealous in prayer, and painful in preaching, and all the while Pride is the Master whom he serves, though in Gods livery. It can take Sanctuary in the holiest actions, and hide it self under the skirt

of vertue it self. Thus while a man is exercising his charity, pride may be the Idol in secret for which he lavisheth out his Gold so freely. It is hard starving this sin, there is nothing almost but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lift up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane, even dare to drink in the bowls of the Sanctuary, nay, rather than starve, it will feed on the carcases of other sins; *Difficile valde vitriatur peccatum, quod ex victoria victiorum nascitur.* This minion pride will stir up the soul to resist, yea, in a manner kill some sins, that she may boastfully shew the head of them, and blow the creature up with the conceit of himself above others; as the *Pharisee* who through pride bragged that he was not as the *Publican*; so that pride, if not lookt to, will have to do every where, and hath a large sphere it moves in. Nothing indeed (without divine assistance) the creature hath or doth, but will soon become a prey to this devourer; but I am not to handle it in its latitude. Pride is either conversant about carnal objects, as pride of beauty, strength, riches, and such like, or about spiritual; the latter we shall speak a little to. I confess for the former, possibly a Saint may be caught in them, no sin to be slighted, yet not

Pride

not so commonly, for ordinarily pride is of those perfections which are futable, if not proper to the state and calling we are in: thus the Musician, he is proud of the skill he hath in his Art, by which he excels others of his rank. The Scholar, though he can play perhaps as well, yet is not proud of that, but looks on it as beneath him; no he is proud of his Learning and choice Notions; and so of others. Now the life of a Christian as a Christian, is superiour to the life of man as a man; and therefore doth not value himself by these which are beneath him, but in higher and more raised perfections, which suit a Christians calling. As a natural man is proud of perfections futable to his natural estate, as Honour, Beauty; so the Christian is prone chiefly, to be puffed with perfections futable to his life; I shall name three: pride of Gifts, pride of Grace, pride of Priviledges; these are the things which Satan chiefly labours to entangle him in.

SECT. I.

First, Pride of Gifts. By Gifts I mean those supernatural abilities, with which the Spirit of God doth enrich and endow the minds of men, for edification of the Body of Christ; of which Gifts the Apostle tells us there is great diversity, and all from the same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 4. There is not greater variety of Colours, and qualities in Plants and Flowers, with which the earth like a Carpet of Needle-work, is variegated for the delight and service of man, than there is of Gifts in the minds of men, natural and spiritual, to render them useful to one another, both in civil Societies, and Christian Fellowship. The Christian, as well as man, is intended to be a sociable Creature; and for the better managing this spiritual Common-wealth among Christians, God doth wisely and graciously provide and impart Gifts, futable to the place every one stands in to his Brethren; as the Vessels are larger or less in the body natural, according to their place therein. Now Satan labours what he can to taint these Gifts, and fly-blow them with pride in the Christian, that so he may spoil the Christians Trade and Commerce, which is mutually maintained by the gifts and graces of one another. Pride of gifts hinders the Christians Trade, at least thriving by their commerce, two ways.

First, Pride of gifts is the cause why we do so little good with them to others.

Secondly, Why we receive so little good from the gifts of others.

First, Pride of gifts hinders the doing of good by them to others, and that upon a threefold account.

First, Pride diverts a man from aiming at that end; so far as pride prevails, the man prays, preaches, &c. rather to be thought good by others; rather to enthrone himself than Christ, in the opinions and hearts of his hearers. Pride carries the man aloft, to be admired for the height of his Parts and Notions, and will not suffer him to stoop so low as to speak of plain truths, or if he does, not plainly; he must have some fine Lace, though on a plain

stoffe; such a one may tickle the ear, but very unlikely to do real good to the souls: alas, it is not that he attends.

Secondly, If this painted *Jezabel* of Pride be perceived to look out at the Window in any exercise, whether of Preaching, Prayer, or Conference, it doth beget a disdain in the spirits of those that hear such a one, both good and bad. 'Tis a sin very odious to a gracious heart, and oft-times makes the stomach go against the food, though good, through their abhorrency of that pride they see in the instrument. It is indeed their weakness; but woe to them that by their pride lead them into temptation: Nay, those that are bad, and may be in the same kind, like not that in another, which they favour in themselves, and so prejudiced, return as bad as they went.

Thirdly, Pride of gifts robs us of Gods blessing in the use of them. The humble man may have Satan at his right hand to oppose him, but be sure the proud man shall find God himself there to resist him, whenever he goes about any duty. God proclaims so much, and would have the proud man know whenever he meets him he will oppose him; *He resists the proud*. Great gifts are beautiful as *Rachel*, but pride makes them also barren like her: Either we must lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.

Secondly, Pride of gifts hinders the receiving of good from others. Pride fills the soul, and a full soul will take nothing from God, much less from man to do it good. Such a one is very dainty: It is not every Sermon, though wholefom food, nor every Prayer, though savoury, will go down; he must have a choice Dish, he thinks he hath better than this of his own; and is such a one like to get good? And truly we may see it, that as the plain Ploughman that can eat of any homely food if wholefom, hath more health, and is able to do more work in a day, than many enjoy or can do in their whole life, that are nice, squeamish, and courtly in their fare; so the humble Christian that can feed on plain Truths, and Ordinances which have not so much of the Art of man to commend them to their palate, enjoy more of God, than the nicer sort of Professors, who are all to be served in a Lordly Dish of rare Gifts. The Church of *Corinth* was famous for gifts above other Churches, 1 Cor. 1. but not in Grace, none so charged for weakness in that, 1 Cor. 3. 2. he calls them *carnal*, *Babes in Christ*, so weak, as not able to digest mans meat; *I have fed you, saith Paul, with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able*. Why? what is the matter? the reason lies, v. 3. *Ye are carnal, there is among you envy and strife*, ver. 4. *One saith, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos*. Pride makes them take parts, and make sides, one for this Preacher, another for that, as they fancied one to excell another. And this is not the way to thrive. Pride destroys Love, and Love wanting Edification is lost. The Devil hath made foul work in the Church by this Engine. *Zincky* tells of one in *Geneva*, who being desired to go hear *Viretus*, that preached at the same time with *Calvin*, answered his Friend, If *Paul* were to preach, *reliq*

relieto Paulo Calvinum audirem; I would leave Paul himself to hear Calvin. And will pride in the gifts of another so far transport, even to the borders of blasphemy? what work then will pride make, when the gifts are a mans own?

SECT. II.

Use 1. Doth Satan thus stir up Saints to this spiritual pride of gifts? first, here is a word to you that have mean gifts, yet truth of grace, be content with thy condition. Perhaps when thou hearest others, how enlargedly they pray, how able to discourse of the truths of God, and the like, thou art ready to go into a corner, and mourn to think how weak thy memory, how dull thy apprehension, how straitned thy spirit, hardly able (though in secret) to utter and expresse thy mind to God in prayer. O thou art ready to think those the happy men and women, and almost murmur at thy condition; well, canst thou not say, though I have not words, I hope I have faith, I cannot dispute for the truth, but I am willing to suffer for it; I cannot remember a Sermon, but I never hear the Word, but I hate sin and love Christ more than ever? Lord thou knowest I love thee. Truly (Christian) thou hast the better part; thou little think'st what a mercy may be wrapt up even in the meanes of thy gifts, or what temptations their gifts expose them to, which God for ought I know, may in mercy deny thee. *Josephs* Coat made him finer than his brethren, but this caused all his trouble, this set the Archers a shooting their Arrows into his side: thus great gifts lift a Saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but it occasions many temptations which thou meetest not with, that art kept low, what with envy from their brethren, malice from Satan, and pride in their own hearts; I dare say, none find so hard a work to go to Heaven as such, much ado to bear up against those waves and winds, while thou creepest along the shore under the wind to Heaven. It is with such, as with some great Lord of little Estate, a meaner man oft hath money in his purse, when he hath none, and can lend his Lordship some at a need. Great gifts and parts are titles of honour among men, but many such may come and borrow grace and comfort of a mean gifted brother; possibly the Preacher of his poor Neighbour. O poor Christian, do not murmur or envy them, but rather pity and pray for them, they need it more than others, his gifts are thine, thy grace is for thy self; thou art like a Merchant that hath his Factor goes to Sea, but he hath his Adventure without hazard brought home. Thou joineest with him in prayer, hast the help of his gifts, but not the temptation of his pride.

Use 2. Secondly, Doth Satan labour thus to draw to pride of gifts? this speaks a word to you to whom God hath given more gifts than ordinary, beware of pride, that is now your snare. Satan is at work, if possible he will turn your Artillery against your self; thy safety lies in thy humility, if this lock be cut, the legions of Hell are on thee. Remember whom thou wrestlest with, spiritual

wickedness, and their play is to lift up, that they may give the forer fall. Now the more to stir up thy heart against it, I shall adde some soul-humbling considerations.

First, Consider, these spiritual gifts are not thy own, and wilt thou be proud of anothers bounty? Is not God the Founder, and can he not soon be the Confounder of thy gifts? Thou that art proud of thy Gourd, what wilt thou be when it is gone? surely then thou wilt be peevish and angry; and truly thou takest the course to be stript of them. Gifts come on other terms than grace. God gives grace as a free-hold, it hath the promise of this and another World, but gifts come on liking; though a Father will not cast off his child, yet he may take away his fine coat and ornaments, if proud of them.

Secondly, Gifts are not meerly for thy self. As the light of the Sun is ministerial, it shines not for its self; so all thy gifts are for others: *Gifts for the edifying of the body*. Suppose a man should leave a Chest of money in your hands to be distributed to others, what folly is it in this man to put this into his own Inventory, and applaud himself that he hath so much money? Poor Soul, thou art but Gods Executor, and by that time thou hast paid all the Legacies, thou wilt see little left for thee to brag and boast of.

Thirdly, Know (Christian) thou shalt be accountable for these Talents; now with what face can a proud Soul look on God? Suppose one left an Executor to pay Legacies, and this man should pay them not as Legacies of another, but gifts of his own. Christ at his ascension gave gifts, that his children should receive, thou hast some in thy hand; now a proud Soul gives out all, not as the Legacy of Christ, but as his own, he assumes all to himself. O how abominable is this to entitle our selves to Christs honour!

Fourthly, Thy gifts commend thee not to God. Man may be taken with thy expression and notion in prayer; but these are all pared off when thy prayer comes before God; *O woman* (saith Christ) *great is thy faith!* not compt and flourishing thy language. It were good after our duties to sort the Ingredients of which they are made up, what grace contributed, and what gifts, and what pride, and when all the heterogeneous stuff is severed, you shall see in what a little compass the actings of grace in our duties will lie.

Fifthly, Consider while thou art priding in thy gifts, thou art dwindling and withering in thy grace. Such are like corn that runs up much into straw, whose ear commonly is but light and thin. Grace is too much neglected, where gifts are too highly prized; we are commanded to be clothed with humility. Our garments cover the shame of our bodies, humility the beauty of the Soul; and as a tender body cannot live without cloaths, so neither can grace without this cloathing of humility. It kills the spirit of praise, when thou shouldst bless God, thou art applauding thy self. It destroys Christian love, and stabs our fellowship with the Saints to the heart: A proud man hath not room enough to walk in company, because the

gifts of others he thinks stand in his way. Pride so distempers the Palate, that it can relish nothing that is drawn from anothers Vessel.

Sixthly, It is the Fore-runner of some great sin, or some great affliction. God will not suffer such a Weed as pride to grow in his Garden, without taking some course or other to root it up; may be he will let thee fall into some great sin, and that shall bring thee home with shame. God useth sometimes a thorn in the flesh, to prick the Bladder of pride in the Spirit; or at least some great affliction, the very end whereof is to *hide pride from man*, Job 33. 17, 18. As you do with your hot-metall'd Horses, ride them over plow'd Lands to tame them, and then you can sit safely on their back. If Gods honour be in danger through thy pride, then expect a Rod, and most likely the affliction shall be in that, which will be most grievous to thee, in the thing thou art proud of. *Hezekiah* boasted of his Treasure, God sends the *Chaldeans* to plunder him. *Jonah* fond of his Gourd, and that is smitten; and if thy spirit be blown up with pride of Gifts, thou art in danger of having them blasted, at least in the opinion of others, whose breath of applause (possibly) was a means to over-set thy unballast spirit.

SECT. III.

Quest. But how would you direct us against this?

Ans. Arguments you have had before, I shall only therefore point to two or three doors, where your enemy comes forth upon you; and surely the very sight thereof, if thou beest loyal to Christ, will stir thee up to fall upon it.

First, Pride discovers it self in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kind of content to see our own face, till at last we fall in love with it. We read of some, whose eyes are full of the adulterers, and cannot cease from sin; a proud heart is full of himself, his own abilities cast their shadow before him; they are in his eye where-ever he goes; the great Subject and Theam of his thoughts is what he is, and what he hath above others, applauding himself, as *Bernard* confesseth, that (when one would think he had little leisure for such thoughts) even in preaching, pride would be whispering in his ear, *Bene fecisti Bernarde*, O well done *Bernard*. Now have a care (Christian) of chatting with such company. Run from such thoughts as from a Bear. If the Devil can get thee to stand on this Pinacle, while he presents thee with the Glory of thy spiritual attainments and endowments for thee to gaze on them, thy weak head will soon turn round in pride: and therefore labour to keep the sense of thy own infirmities lively in thy soul to divert the temptation. As those who are subject to some kind of Fits, carry about them things proper for the disease, that when the Fit is coming (which oft is occasioned with a sweet perfume) they may use them for their help. Sweet Scents are not more dangerous for them, than any thing that may applaud thee is to thy soul. Have a care therefore not only of wearing such thoughts in thy own bo-

lom, but also of sitting by others, that bring the sweet Scent of thy perfections to thee by their flattery.

Secondly, This kind of pride appears in a forwardness to expose it self to view. *David's* Brethren were mistaken in him indeed, 1 Sam. 17. 18. but oft the pride and naughtiness of the heart breaks out at this door. Christs carnal friends bid Christ shew himself; Pride loves to climb up, not as *Zachens* to see Christ, but to be seen himself. The fool (Solomon tells us) hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover it self, Prov. 18. 2. Pride would be some body, and therefore comes abroad to court the multitude, whereas humility delights in privacy; as the Leaves do cover and shade the fruits, that some hand must gently lift them up before they can see the fruit: so should humility and a holy modesty conceal the perfections of the soul, till a hand of Providence by some call invites them out. There is a pride in naked gifts as well as in naked Breasts and Backs: Humility is a necessary Veil to all other Graces; and therefore first, Christian, look when ever thou comest forth to publick duty, that thou hast a Call: it is obedience to be ready to answer when God calls thee forth; but it is pride to run before God speaks. Secondly, when called, earnestly implore divine strength against this enemy: shun not a duty for fear of pride, thou maist shew it in the very seeming to elope it, but go in the strength of God against it; there is more hope of overcoming it by obedience than disobedience.

Thirdly, In envying the Gifts of others, when they seem to blind our own, that they are not so fair a prospect as we desire. This is a weed may grow too rank in a good soil. *Aaron* and *Miriam* could not bear *Moses* his honour, Numb. 12. 1. That was the business, though they pick'd a quarrel with him about his Wife (because an *Ethiopian*) as appears plainly, vers. 2. Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by *Moses*; hath he not also spoken by us? They thought *Moses* went away with too much of the honour, and did repine that God should use him more than themselves. And 'tis observable, that the lusting for flesh, broke out among the mixt multitude and baser sort of people, Numb. 11. 4, 5. But this of pride and envy took fire in the bosoms of the most eminent for place and piety. O what need then have we, poor Creatures, to watch our hearts when we see such precious servants of God led into temptation? The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy, Jam. 4. 5. Our corrupt nature is ever putting on to this sin. 'Tis as hard to keep our hearts and this sin asunder, as 'tis to hinder two Lovers from meeting together. Thatch is not more ready to be fired with every flash of Lightning, than the heart to be kindled at the shining forth of any excellent Gift or Grace in another. It was one of the first Windows that corrupt nature lookt out at, a sin that shed the first blood; *Cain's* envy hatcht *Abel's* murder. Now if ever thou meanest to get the mastery of this sin,

First, Call in help from Heaven. No sooner hath the Apostle set forth how big and teeming full the heart of man is with envy, but he shews where

a fountain of Grace is infinitely exceeding that of Lust; *the spirit within us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace*, v. 5. And therefore sit not down tamely under this sin, it is not unconquerable. God can give thee more Grace than thou hast sin, more humility than thou hast pride. But so be humble as cordially to beg his Grace, and thou shalt not be so proud as wickedly to envy his Gifts or Grace in others.

Secondly, Make this sin as black and ugly as thou canst possibly to thy thought, that when it is presented to thee, thou maist abhor it the more. Indeed there needs no more than its own face, (wouldst thou look wistly on it) to make thee out of love with it. For first, This envying of others Gifts casts great contempt upon God, and that more ways than one.

First, When thou enviest the gifts of thy Brethren, thou takest upon thee to teach God what he shall give, and to whom; as if the great God should take counsel or ask leave of thee before he dispense his gifts, and darest thou stand to thy own envious thoughts with this interpretation? such a one thou findest Christ himself give, *Mat. 20. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* as if Christ had said, what hath any to do to cavil at my disposal of what is not theirs, but mine to give?

Secondly, Thou malignest the goodness of God. It troubles thee, it seems, that God hath a heart to do good to any besides thyself; thy eye is evil because his is good. Wouldst not thou have God be good? you had as good speak out, and say, You would not have him God, he can as soon cease to be God, as to be good.

Thirdly, thou art an enemy to the Glory of God, as thou defacest that which should set it forth. Every gift is a Ray of Divine excellency; and as all the beams declare the glory of the Sun, so all the gifts God imparts, declare the glory of God: Now envy labours to deface and sully the representations of God, it hath ever something to disparage the excellency of another withal. God shewed *Miriam* her sin by her punishment; she went to bespatter *Moses* that shone so eminently with the Gifts and Graces of God, and God spits in her face, *Numb. 12.* yea, fills her all over with a noisome Scab, Dost thou cordially wish well to the honour of God? why then hangest thou thy head, and dost not rather rejoyce to see him glorified by the gifts of others. Could a *Heaven* take it so well, when himself was passed by, and others chosen to places of honour and government, that he said, He was glad his City could find so many more worthy than himself? and shall a Christian repine that any are found fit to honour God besides himself?

Secondly, Thou wrongest thy Brother, as thou sinnest against the Law of Love, which obligeth thee to rejoyce in his good as thy own, yea, to prefer him in honour before thyself. Thou canst not love and envy the same person; envy is as contrary to

love, as the hectical feverish fire in the body is to the kindly heat of nature. *Charity envieth not*; 1 Cor. 13. How can it when it lives where it loves? and when thou ceasest to love, thou beginnest to hate and kill him, and dost not thou tremble to be found a Murderer at last?

Thirdly, Thou consultest worst of all for thyself. God is out of thy reach, what thou spittest against Heaven, thou art sure to have fall on thy own face at last; and thy Brother, whom thou enviest, God stands bound to defend him against thy envy, because he is maligned for what he hath of God in him. Thus did God plead *Josephs* cause against his envious Brethren, and *David* against wicked *Saul*. Thyself only hast real hurt.

First, Thou deprivest thyself of what thou mightest reap from the gifts of others. That old saying is true, *Tolle invidiam, mea tua sum, & tua mea*: What thou hast is mine, and what I have thine, when envy is gone. Whereas now like the Leech (which they say draws out the worst blood) thou suckest nothing but what swells thy mind with discontent, and is after vomited out in strife and contention. O what a sad thing is it, that one should go from a precious Sermon, a sweet Prayer, and bring nothing away but a grudge against the Instrument God used, as we see in the *Pharisees*, and others at Christ's preaching.

Secondly, Thou robbest thyself of the joy of thy life: *He that is cruel, troubles his own self*, *Prov. 11. 17.* The envious man doth it to purpose, he sticks the honour and esteem of others as thorns in his own heart, he cannot think of them without pain and anguish, and he must needs pine that is ever in pain.

Thirdly, Thou throwest thyself into the mouth of temptation, thou needest give the Devil no greater advantage, it is a Stock any sin almost will grow upon. What will not the Patriarchs do to rid their hands of *Joseph* whom they envied? that very pride which made them disdain the thought of bowing to his Sheaf, made them stoop far lower, even to debase themselves as low as Hell, and be the Devils Instruments to sell their dear Brother into slavery, which might have been worse to him (if God had not provided otherwise) than if they had slain him on the place. What an impotent mind and cruel did *Saul* shew against *David*, when once envy had envenomed his heart? from that day, wherein he heard *David* prefer'd in the Womens Songs above himself, he could never get that sound out of his head, but did ever devote this innocent man to death in his thoughts, who had done him no other wrong, but in being an instrument to keep the Crown on his head, by the hazard of his own life with *Goliath*. O it is a bloody sin, it is the womb wherein a whole litter of other sins are formed, *Roms. 1. 29. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c.* and therefore except you be resolved to bid the Devil welcome, and his whole Train, resist him in this, that comes before to take up Quarters for the rest.

CHAP. X.

Of Pride of Grace.

SEcondly, Pride of grace. This is another way Satan assaults the Christian. 'Tis true, grace cannot be proud, yet 'tis possible a Saint may be proud of his grace; there is nothing the Christian hath or doth, but this worm of pride will breed in it. The World we live in is corruptible, and all here is subject to putrifie, as things kept in a rasty muggish Room, subjects them to mould. It is not the nature of grace, but the salt of the Covenant keeps and preserves the purity of it; in Heaven indeed we shall be safe. But how can a Saint be said to be proud of his grace? Then a Soul is proud of his grace, when he trusts in his grace. Trust and confidence is an incommunicable flower of God's Crown as Sovereign Lord, even among men it goes along with Royalty. Set up a King, and as such he expects you should give him this, as the undoubted Prerogative of his place, and therefore to seek protection from any other is (as it were) to set up another King, *Judg. 8. 15.* *If indeed you anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow.* Therefore when a soul puts his trust in any thing beside God, he sets up a Prince, a King, an Idol, to which he gives Gods glory away. Now it doth not make the sin less, that it is the grace of God we crown, than if it were a lust we crowned. 'Tis Idolatry to worship a holy Angel as well as a cursed Devil, to make our grace our God, as well as our belly our God, nay rather it addes to it, because that is now used to rob him of his glory, which should have brought him in the greatest revenue of glory; certainly the more treasure you put into your servants hands, the greater wrong to you for him to run away with it. I doubt not but *David* could have born it better to have seen a Philistine drive him from his Throne than a son, an *Abalom*. But how can or may a Saint be said to trust in his grace?

First, By trusting to the strength of his grace.

Secondly, By trusting on the worth of his grace. Indeed a professed trust in grace, I conceive, cannot stand with grace: but there is an oblique kind of trust, or that which by interpretation may savour of it. Satan is illie in his assaults.

SECT. I.

First, of the first, To trust in the strength of grace is to be proud of grace. This is opposed to that poverty of spirit so commended by our Saviour, *Matth. 5.* by which a man lives in the continual sense of his spiritual beggerie and nothingness, and so hath his recourse to Christ, as the poor to the rich mans door, knowing he hath nothing at home to maintain him. Such a one was *Paul*, not able to do any thing of himself; he is not ashamed to let the world know that Christ carries his purse for him. *Our sufficiency is of God;* yea, after ma-

ny years trading, this holy man sees nothing he hath got, *Phil. 3. 13.* *I count not my self to have apprehended;* he is still pressing forward: Ask him how he lives, he'll tell you who keeps house for him; *I live, yet not I, Gal. 2. 20.* as ask a Beggar where he hath his meat, cloaths, &c. he'll say, *I thank my good Master.* Now Satan chiefly labours to puff the soul up with an over-weening conceit of his own ability, as the readiest means to bring him into his snare; Satan knows 'tis God's method to give his children into his hands, when once they grow proud and self-confident: *Hezekiah* was left to a temptation, *2 Chron. 32. 31.* *to try him;* Why? God had tried him to purpose a little before in an affliction, what needs this? O! *Hezekiah's* heart was lifted up after his affliction. It was time for God to let the tempter alone a little to foil him; probably now *Hezekiah* had high thoughts of his grace; O he would never do as he had done before, and God will let him see what a weak creature he is. *Peter* makes a whip for his own back in that bravado, *Though all should forsake thee, yet will not I.* Christ now in meer mercy must set Satan on him, to lay him on his back, that seeing the weakness of his faith, he might be dismounted from the height of his pride. All that I shall say from this, is to intreat thee (Christian) to have a care of this kind of pride. You know what *Joab* said to *David*, when he perceived his heart lift up with the strength of his Kingdom, and therefore would have the people numbred, *The Lord God add unto thy people, how many soever they be, a hundred fold; but why doth my Lord the King delight in this thing? 2 Sam. 24. 3.* The Lord add to the strength of thy grace a hundred fold, but why delightest thou in this? why shouldst thou be lifted up? Is it not grace? shall the Groom be proud because he rides on his Masters horse? or the mud-wall because the Sun shines on it? May'st thou not say of every dram of grace, as the young man of his Hatchet, *Alas, Master, it is borrowed;* nay, not only borrowed, but thou canst not use it without his skill and strength that lends it thee. O beware of this, let not those vain thoughts lodge in thee, lest thou enter into temptation. It is a breach a whole troop of sins may enter at, yea will, except speedily filled up.

First, It will make thee soon grow loose and negligent in thy duty. 'Tis sense of insufficiency keeps a soul at work, to pray and hear, as want in the house and hutch holds up the market, no man comes thither to buy what he hath at home. *Up, saith Jacob, go down to Egypt for Corn, that we live and not dye.* Thus saith the needy Christian, Up soul, to thy God, thy faith is weak, thy patience almost spent, ply thee to the Throne of grace, go with thy homer to the Ordinances, and get some supplies. Now a soul conceited of his store hath another song,
Soul,

Soul, take thine ease, thou art richly laid up for many days. Let the doubting soul pray, thy faith is strong; let the weak lie at the breast, thou art well grown up; nay, 'tis well if it goes not further to a despising of Ordinances, except they have some more courtly fare than ordinary, such a pass were the *Corinthians* come to, 1 Cor. 4. 8. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye reign like Kings without us. I pray observe how he lays the accent on the particle now; now ye are rich, as if he had said, I knew the time, if Paul had been come to Town, and news spread abroad in the City that Paul was to preach, you would have flock'd to hear him, and blessed God for the season, but then ye were poor and empty; now ye are full, you have got to a higher attainment; Paul is a plain fellow now, he may carry his chear to a hungry people if he will, we are well apaid. And when once the heart is come to this, 'tis easie to judge what will follow.

Secondly, This trusting to the strength of grace will make the soul bold and venturesome. The humble Christian is the wary Christian, he knows his weakness, and this makes him afraid. I have a weak head, saith he, I may be soon disputed into an error and heresie, and therefore I dare not come where such stuff is broached, lest my weak head should be intoxicated: the confident man, he'll sip of every cup, he fears none; no, he is stablished in the truth, a whole team of hereticks shall not draw him aside. I have a vain light heart, saith the humble soul, I dare not come among wicked debauched company, lest I should at last bring the naughty man home with me. But one trusting to the strength of his grace, dares venture into the Devils quarters. Thus Peter into the rout of Christs enemies, and how he came off you know; there his faith had been slain on the place, had not Christ founded a retreat, by the seasonable look of love he gave him. Indeed I have read of some bragging Philosophers, who did not think it enough to be temperate, except they had the object for intemperance present; and therefore they would go into Taverns and Whore-houses, as if they meant to beat the Devil on his own ground; but the Christian knows an enemy nearer than so, which they were ignorant of; and that he need not go over his own threshold to challenge the Devil. He hath lust in his bosome that will be hard enough for him all his days, without giving it the vantage of ground. Christian, I know no sin but thou mayest be left to commit it, except one. It was a bold speech of him, and yet a good man, (as I have heard) If Clapham dye of the Plague, say Clapham had no faith; and this made him boldly go among the infected. If a Christian, thou shalt not dye of spiritual Plagues, yet such may have the Plague-sores of gross sins running on them for a time, and is not this sad enough? therefore walk humbly with thy God.

Thirdly, This high conceit of the strength of thy grace will make thee cruel and churlish to thy weak brethren in their infirmities, a sin that least becomes a Saint, Gal. 6. 1. If any one be overtaken, you shall be spiritual restore such a one with meekness; but how shall a soul get such a meek spirit? It fol-

lows, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. What makes men hard to the poor? they think they shall never be so themselves. Why are many so sharp in their censures? but because they truit too much to their grace, as if they could never fall. O you are in the body, and the body of sin in you, therefore fear. Bernard used to say, when he heard any scandalous sin of a Professor, *Hodie illi, cras mihi*. He fell to day, I may stumble to morrow.

SECT. II.

The second way a soul may be proud of his grace, is by resting on it for his acceptance with God. The Scripture calls inherent grace *our own righteousness*, (though God indeed be the efficient of it) and opposeth it to the righteousness of Christ, which alone is called the *righteousness of God*, Rom. 10. 1. Now to rest on any grace inherent, is to exalt our own righteousness above the righteousness of God; and what pride will this amount to? If this were so, then a Saint when he comes to Heaven might say, This is Heaven which I have built, my grace hath purchased; and thus the God of Heaven should become tenant to his creature in Heaven. No, God hath cast the order of our salvation into another method, of grace, but not of grace in us, but grace to us. Inherent grace hath its place and office to accompany salvation, Heb. 6. 9. but not procure it. This is Christs work, not graces. When Israel waited on the Lord at Mount Sinai, they had their bounds, not a man must come up besides Moses to treat with God, no, not touch the Mount lest they die: Thus all the graces of the Spirit wait on God, but none come up to challenge any acceptance of God besides faith, which is a grace that presents the soul not in its own garments. But you will say, What needs all this? where is the man that trusts in his grace? Alas, where is the Christian that doth fully stand clear, and freely come off by his own righteousness? he is a rare Pilot indeed that can steer his faith in so direct a course, as not now and then to knock upon this duty, and run on ground upon that grace. Abraham went in to Hagar, and the children of Abrahams faith are not perfectly dead to the Law, and may be found sometimes in Hagar arms, witness the flux and reflux of our faith, according to the various aspect of our obedience; when this seems full, then our faith is at a spring tide, and covers all the mountains of our fears; but let it seem to wane in any service or duty, then the Jordan of our faith flies back, and leaves the soul naked. The Devils spight is at Christ, and therefore since he could not hinder his landing, which he endeavour'd all he could, nor work his will on his person when he was come; he goes now in a more refined way to darken the glory of his sufferings, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, by blending ours with his; the Doctrine of Justification by faith hath had more works and batteries made against it, than any other in the Scripture. Indeed many other errors were but his lie approaches to get nearer to undermine this; and lastly, when he cannot

cannot hide this truth (which now shines in the Church like the Sun in his strength) then he labours to hinder the practical improvement of it, that we (if he can help it) shall not live up to our own principles, making us at the same time, that in our judgment we profess acceptance only through Christ, in our practice confute our selves. Now there is a double pride in the soul he makes use of for this end, the one I may call a mannerly pride, the other a self-applauding pride.

First, A mannerly pride, which comes forth in the habit and guise of humility, and that discovers it self, either at the souls first coming to Christ, and keeps him from closing with the promise, or afterwards in the daily course of a Christians walking with God; which keeps him from comfortable living on Christ.

I will in nowise cast out
 First, When a poor soul is staved off the promise by the sense of his own unworthiness and great unrighteousness; tell him of a pardon, alas, he is so wrapt up with the thoughts of his own vileness, that you cannot fasten it upon him. What, will God ever take such a Toad as he is into his bosome, discount so many great abominations at once, and receive him into his favour, that hath been so long in rebellious arms against him? he cannot believe it, no, though he hears what Christ hath done and suffered for sin, he refuseth to be comforted. Little doth the soul think what a bitter root such thoughts spring from, thou thinkest thou dost well thus to declaim against thy self, and aggravate thy sins; indeed thou canst not paint them black enough, or entertain too low and base thoughts of thy self for them: But what wrong hath God and Christ done thee, that thou shouldest so unworthily reflect upon the mercy of the one, and merit of the other? Mayest thou not do this, and be tender of the good Name of God also? Is there no way to shew thy sense of thy sin, except thou asperse thy Saviour? Canst thou not charge thy self, but thou must condemn God, and put Christ and his Blood to shame before Satan, who triumphs more in this than all thy other sins? In a word, though thou like a wretch hast undone thy self, and damned thy soul by thy sins, yet art thou not willing God should have the glory of pardoning them, and Christ the honour of procuring the same? or art thou like him in the Gospel, *Luke 16. 3. who could not dig, and to beg was ashamed.* Thou canst not earn Heaven by thy own righteousness, and is thy spirit so stout that thou wilt not beg it for Christs sake, yea, take it at Gods hands, who in the Gospel comes a begging to thee, and beseecheth thee to be reconciled to him? Ah soul! who would ever have thought there could have been such pride under such a modest veil? and yet none like it. 'Tis horrible pride for a Beggar to starve, rather than to take an alms at a rich mans hands; a malefactor rather to chuse his halter, than a pardon from his gracious Prince's hand: but here is one infinitely surpassing both; a soul pining and perishing in sin, and yet rejecting the mercy of God, and the helping hand of Christ to save him. Though *Abigail* did not think her self worthy to be *Dauids* Wife, yet she thought *David* was worthy

of her, and therefore she humbly accepted his offer, and makes haste to go with the messengers: That is the sweet frame of heart indeed, to lie low in the sense of your own vileness, yet to believe; to renounce all conceit of worthiness in our selves, yet not therefore to renounce all hope of mercy, but the more speedily to make haste to Christ that woos us. All the pride and unmannerliness lies in making Christ stay for us, who bids his messengers invite poor sinners to come, and tell them, *all things are ready.* But may be thou wilt say still, it is not pride that keeps thee off, but thou canst not believe that ever God will entertain such as thou art. Truly, thou mendest the matter but little with this, either thou keepest some lust in thy heart, which thou wilt not part with to obtain the benefit of the Promise, and then thou art a notorious hypocrite, who under such an out-cry for thy sins, canst drive a secret trade with Hell at the same time; or if not so, thou dost discover the more pride in that thou darest stand out, when thou hast nothing to oppose against the many plain and clear promises of the Gospel, but thy peremptory unbelief. God bids the wicked forsake his ways, and turn to him, and he will abundantly pardon him; but thou sayest, thou canst not believe this for thy own self. Now who speaks the truth? one of you two must be the liar, either thou must take it with shame to thy self, for what thou hast said against God and his promise, (and that is thy best course) or thou must proudly, yea, blasphemously cast it upon God, as every unbeliever doth, *1 Joh. 5. 10.* Nay, thou makest him forsworn, for God, to give poor sinners the greater security in flying for refuge to Christ, who is that *hope* set before them, *Heb. 6. 17, 18.* hath sworn they should have strong consolation: *O beatos quorum causa Deus jurat! O miserimos si nec juranti credamus! Tertul. de penit.* O happy we, for whose sake God puts himself under an Oath; but O miserable we, who will not believe God, no, not when he swears!

Secondly, When the Soul hath shot the great Gulf, and got into a state of peace and life by closing with Christ, yet this mannerly pride Satan makes use of in the Christians daily course of duty and obedience, to disturb him, and hinder his peace and comfort. O how uncheerfully, yea, joylessly, do many precious souls pass their days! If you enquire what is the cause, you shall find all their joy runs out at the Crannies of their imperfect duties, and weak Graces; they cannot pray as they would, and walk as they desire with evenness and constancy: they see how short they fall of the holy rule in the Word, and the pattern which others more eminent in Grace do set before them, and this though it doth not make them throw the promises away, and quite renounce all hope in Christ, yet it begets many sad fears and suspicions, yea, makes them sit at the Feast Christ hath provided, and not know whether they may eat or not. In a word, as it robs them of their joy, so Christ of that glory which he should receive from their rejoycing in him. I do not say (Christian) thou oughtest not to mourn for those defects thou findest in thy graces and duties, nay, thou couldest not approve

approve thy self to be sincere, if thou didst not. A gracious heart, seeing how far short his renewed state (for the present) falls of mans primitive holiness by creation, cannot but weep and mourn (as the Jews to behold the second Temple) yet (Christian) even while the tears are in thy eyes for thy imperfect graces, (for a soul riseth with his grave-cloaths on) thou shouldest rejoyce, yea, triumph over all these thy defects by faith in Christ, *in whom thou art compleat, Col. 1. 10.* while imperfect in thy self. Christs presence in the second Temple (which the first had not) made it (though comparatively mean) more glorious than the first, *Hag. 2. 9.* how much more doth his presence in this spiritual Temple of a gracious heart, imputing his righteousness to cover all its uncomeliness, make the soul glorious above man at first? This is a garment for which (as Christ saith of the Lillie) we neither spin nor toil; yet Adam in all his created royalty was not so clad, as the weakest believer is with this on his soul. Now, Christian, consider well what thou dost, while thou sittest languishing under the sense of thy own weaknesses, and refuseth to rejoyce in Christ, and live comfortably on the sweet privileges thou art interested in by thy marriage to him. Dost thou not bewray some of this spiritual pride working in thee? O! if thou couldest pray without wandering, walk without limping, believe without wavering, then thou couldest rejoyce and walk cheerfully. It seems, soul, thou stayest to bring the ground of thy comfort with thee, and not to receive it purely from Christ. O how much better were it if thou wouldest say with David, *Though my house (my heart) be not so with God, yet he hath made with me a covenant ordered in all things and sure;* and this is all my desire, all my confidence: Christ I oppose to all my sins. Christ to all wants, he is my all in all, and all above all. Indeed all those complaints of our wants and weaknesses, so far as they withdraw our hearts from relying cheerfully on Christ, they are but the language of pride hankering after the Covenant of Works. O'tis hard to forget our Mother-tongue, which is so natural to us; labour therefore to be sensible of it, how grievous it is to the Spirit of Christ. What would a Husband say, if his Wife instead of expressing her love to him, and delight in him, should day and night do nothing but weep and cry to think of her former Husband that is dead? The Law (as a Covenant) and Christ are compared to two Husbands, *Rom. 7. 4.* *Ye are become dead to the Law, the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.* Now thy sorrow for the defect of thy own righteousness, when it hinders thy rejoycing in Christ, is but a whining after thy other husband: And this Christ cannot but take unkindly; that thou art not as well pleased to lie in the bosom of Christ, and have thy happiness from him, as with your old Husband the Law.

Secondly, A self-applauding pride, when the heart is secretly lift up, so as to promise it self acceptance at Gods hands, for any duty or act of obedience it performs, and doth not when most assisted go out of his own actings, to lay the weight

of his expectation entirely upon Christ; every such glance of the souls eye is adulterous, yea, idolatrous. If thy heart, Christian, at any time be secretly enticed, (as Job saith of another kind of Idolatry) or thy mouth doth kiss thy hand, that is, dote so far on thy own duties or righteousness, as to give them this inward worship of thy confidence and trust, this is a great iniquity indeed: For, in this thou deniest the God that is above, who hath determined thy faith to another object. Thou comest to open Heaven-gate with the old Key, when God hath set on a new Lock. Dost thou not acknowledge that thy first entrance into thy justified state was of pure mercy? Thou wert justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, *Rom. 7. 24.* And whom art thou beholden to, now thou art reconciled, for thy further acceptance in every duty or holy action? to thy duty, thy obedience, thy self, or Christ? The same Apostle will tell you, *Rom. 5. 2.* *By whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.* If Christ should not lead thee in, and all thou doest, thou art sure to find the door shut upon thee; there is no more place for desert now thou art gracious, than when thou wert graceless, *Rom. 1. 17.* *The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith.* We are not only made alive by Christ, but we live by Christ: Faith sucks in continual pardoning, assisting, comforting mercy from him, as the lungs suck in the air. Heaven-way is paved with grace and mercy to the end.

Use. Be exhorted above all, to watch against this play of Satan; beware thou retest not in thy own righteousness: Thou standest under a tottering wall; The very cracks thou seest in thy graces and duties, when best, bid thee stand off, except thou wouldest have them fall on thy head; the greatest step to Heaven, is out of our own doors, over our own threshold. It hath cost many a man his life when his house on fire, a grippleness to save some of the stuff, which venturing among the flames to preserve, they have perished themselves; more have lost their souls by thinking to carry some of their own stuff with them to Heaven: such a good work or duty, while they, like lingring Lot, have been loth to leave in point of confidence, have themselves perished. O Sirs, come out, come out, leave what is your own in the fire, flie to Christ naked, he hath cloathing for you better than your own: Poor to Christ, and he hath Gold, not like thine, which will consume and be found drossie in the fire, but such as hath in the fiery tryal past in Gods righteous judgment for pure and full weight. You cannot be found in two places at once, chuse whether you will be found in your own righteousness, or in Christ's. Those who have had more to shew than thy self, have thrown away all, and gone a begging to Christ. Read Paul's Inventory, *Phil. 3.* what he had, what he did, yet all dross and loss: Give him Christ, and take the rest who will. So Job, as holy a man as trod on earth, (God himself being witness) yet saith, *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul, I would despise my life, Job 9. 21.* He had acknowledged

ledged his imperfection before; now he makes a supposition, (indeed *quod non est supponendum*:) If I were perfect, yet would I not know my own soul; I would not entertain any such thoughts as should puff me up into such a confidence of my holiness, as to make it my plea with God. Like to our common phrase; we say, Such a one hath excellent parts; but he knows it, that is, he is proud of it. Take heed of knowing thy own grace in this sense: Thou canst not give a greater wound both to thy grace and comfort, than by thus priding thy self in it.

SECT. III.

First, Thy Grace cannot thrive so long as thou thus restand on it. A Legal spirit is no friend to Grace; nay, a bitter enemy against it, as appeared by the Pharisees in Christ's time. Grace comes not by the Law, but by Christ; thou maist stand long enough by it, before thou gettest any life of Grace into thy soul, or further life into thy Grace. If thou wouldst have this, thou must set thy self under Christs wings by faith; from his Spirit in the Gospel alone, comes this kindly natural heat to hatch thy soul to the life of holiness, and increase what thou hast; and thou canst not come under Christs wings, till thou comest from under the shadow of the other, by renouncing all expectation from thy own works and services. You know *Reuben's* curse, that he should not excel, because he went up into his Fathers bed; when other Tribes encreased, he stood at a little number. By trusting in thy own works thou dost worst by Christ, and shalt thou excel in Grace? Perhaps some of you have been long Professors, and yet come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly-mindedness, mortification; and 'tis worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your Profession, whether there be not a Legal Principle that hath too much acted you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas, this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and Gospel-principles laid in the room thereof. Try but this course, and see whether the spring of thy Grace will not come on apace. *David* gives an account how he came to stand and flourish, when some that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. *Lo* (saith he) *this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches. But I am like a green Olive-tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever, Psal. 52. 7, 8.* While others trust in the riches of their own righteousness and services, and make not Christ their strength, do thou renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and thou shalt be like a green Olive, when they fade and wither.

Secondly, Christian, you will not thrive in true comfort, so long as you rest in any inherent work of Grace, and do not stand clear of your own actings and righteousness. Gospel-comfort springs from a Gospel-root, which is Christ, Phil.

3. 3. *We are the Circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Now, a soul that rests on any holiness in himself, he grafts his comfort upon himself, not Christ; he sucks his own breast, not Christ's, and so makes Christ a dry Nurse: And what comfort can grow on that dry tree? The Spirit is our Comforter, as well as our Teacher and Counsellour. Now as the Spirit when he teacheth, comes not with any new or strange truth, but takes of Christs own, (what he finds in the Word) so where he comforts, he takes of Christs own, his Righteousness, not our own: Christ is the matter and ground of his comfort; all Cordials are but Christ distill'd, and made up in several promises; his acting, not ours; He doth not say, Soul, rejoyce, thou art holy; but, Soul, triumph, Christ is righteous, and is *the Lord thy righteousness*: Not, Soul, thou prayest sweetly, fear not; but, thou hast an Advocate with the Father, Christ the righteous. So that the first step to the receiving of comfort from the Spirit, is to send away all comforters of our own. As in learning of the Spirit, he that will be taught by him, must first become a fool, (that is, no way lean to his own understanding) so he that would be comforted, must first be emptied of all self-supports, must not lean to his own comforts. As a Physician first bids his Patient cast off all others he hath tampered with; he asks what Physick he hath had from them, takes off their Plasters, and throws away their Physick, and goes about the work *de novo*: So the Spirit, when he comes to comfort a poor Soul, first, persuades the Soul to send away all its own Physicians: Oh, saith the soul, I have been in the hand of such a duty, such a course of obedience, and have thought sure now I shall be well, and have comfort now I do this duty, set upon such a holy course. Well, saith the Spirit, if you will have me do any thing, these must all be dismiss'd in point of confidence. Now, and not till now, is the soul a subject fit to receive the Spirits comforts. And therefore, friends, as you love your inward peace, beware what Vessel you draw your comfort from. Grace is finite, and so cannot afford much: 'Tis leaking, and so cannot hold long: thou drinkest in a riven Dish, that hast thy comfort from thy Grace. 'Tis mixt, and so weak; and weak Grace cannot give strong consolation; and such thou needest, especially in strong conflicts. Nay lastly, Thy comfort which thou drawest from it is stolen, thou dost not come honestly by it; and stolen comforts will not thrive with thee. O what folly is it for the Child to play the thief for that which he may freely and more fully have from his Father, who gives and reproacheth not? That comfort which thou wouldst filch out of thy own Righteousness and Duties, behold it is laid up for thee in Christ, from whose fulness thou maist carry as much as thy Faith can hold, and none to check thee: Yea, the more thou improvest Christ for thy comfort, the more heartily welcome; we are bid to *open our mouth wide, and he will fill it.*

CHAP. XI.

The third kind of spiritual Pride, viz. Pride of Priviledges.

THe third kind of Pride (spiritual pride I mean) is pride of Priviledges, with which these wicked spirits labour to blow up the Christian. To name three:

First, When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service.

Secondly, When God honours a Saint to suffer for his Truth or Cause.

Thirdly, When God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his Love, and fills the Soul with joy and comfort. These are priviledges not equally dispensed to all; and therefore where they are, Satan takes the advantage of assailing such with pride.

SECT. I.

First, When God calls a person to some eminent place, or useth him to do some special piece of service. Indeed it requires a great measure of Grace to keep the heart low, when the man stands high. The Apostle speaking how a Minister of the Gospel should be qualified, *1 Tim. 3. 6.* saith, He must not be a *Novice*, or a young Convert, *lest he should be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the Devil.* As if he had said, This Calling is honourable; if he be not well ballast with humility, a little gust from Satan will tople him into this sin. The Seventy that Christ first sent out to preach the Gospel, and prevail'd so miraculously over Satan; even these while they trod on the Serpents head, he turn'd again, and had like to have stung them with pride: which our Saviour perceived, when they return'd in triumph, and told what great miracles they had wrought; and therefore he takes them off that glorying, lest it should degenerate into vain-glory, and bids them *not rejoyce that Devils were subject to them, but rather that their names were writ in heaven.* As if he had said, It is not the honour of your Calling, and success of your Ministry will save you; there shall be some cast to the Devils, who shall then say, *Lord, Lord, in thy Name we have cast out Devils!* And therefore value not your selves by that; but rather evidence to your souls that ye are of mine elect ones, which will stand you more in stead at the great day than all this.

SECT. II.

A second priviledge is, when God honours a person to suffer for his Truth; this is a great priviledge. *Unto you it is given not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake.* God doth not use to give worthless gifts to his Saints; there is some preciousness in it which a carnal eye cannot see. Faith (you will say) is a great gift, but Perseverance greater; without which Faith would be little worth; and per-

severance in suffering, this above both honourable. This made *John Careless*, our English Martyr (who though he died not at the Stake, yet in Prison for Christ) say, Such an honour 'tis, as Angels are not permitted to have, therefore God forgive me mine unthankfulness. Now when Satan cannot scare a soul from prison, yet then he will labour to puff him up in prison; when he cannot make him pity himself, then he will flatter him till he prides in himself. Affliction from God, exposeth to impatience; for God, to pride. And therefore (Christians) labour to fortifie your selves against this temptation of Satan: How soon you may be called to suffering work, you know not; such clouds oft are not long a rising. Now to keep thy heart humble when thou art honoured to suffer for the truth, Consider,

First, Though thou dost not deserve those suffering at mans hand (thou canst and maist in that regard glory in thy innocency, thou sufferest not as an evil doer) yet thou canst not but confess it is a just affliction from God in regard of sin in thee; and this methinks should keep thee humble: The same suffering may be Martyrdom in regard of man, and yet a Fatherly chastising for sin in regard of God. None suffered without sin, but Christ; and therefore none may glory in them, but he; Christ in his own, we in his: *God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ, Gal. 6.* This kept *Mr. Bradford* humble in his sufferings for the Truth: None more rejoyced in them, and blessed God for them, yet none more humble under them than he. And what kept him in this humble frame? Read his godly Letters, and you shall find almost in all how he bemoans his sins, and the sins of the Protestants under the Reign of King Edward: *It was time (saith he) for God to put his rod into the Papists hands, we were grown so proud, formal, unfruitful, yea, to loath and despise the means of Grace, whom we enjoyed the liberty thereof; and therefore God hath brought the wheel of persecution on us.* As he lookt at the honour, to make him thankful; so to sin, to keep him humble.

Secondly, Consider who bears thee up, and carries thee through thy sufferings for Christ. Is it thy Grace, or his, that is sufficient for such a work? thy Spirit, or Christs, by which thou speakest, when call'd to bear witness to the truth? How comes it to pass thou art a sufferer, and not a persecutor; a confessor, and not a denier; yea, a betrayer of Christ and his Gospel? This thou owest for to God; he is not beholden to thee, that thou wilt part with Estate, Credit, or Life it self for his sake. If thou hadst a thousand Lives, thou wouldest owe them all to him: But thou art beholden to God exceedingly, that he will call for these in this way, which has such an honour and reward attending it. He might have suffered thee to live in thy lusts, and

at last to suffer the loss of all these for them: Oh, how many dye at the Gallows as Martyrs in the Devils cause, for Felonies, Rapes, and murders! Or he might withdraw his grace, and leave thee to thy own cowardise and unbelief, and then thou wouldest soon shew thy self in thy colours. The stoutest Champions for Christ, have been taught how weak they are if Christ steps aside. Some that have given great testimony of their faith and resolution in Christs cause, even to come so near dying for his Name, as to give themselves to be bound to the stake, and fire to be kindled upon them, yet then their hearts have failed: As that holy man Mr. *Beubridge* in our *English Martyrol.* who thrust the faggots from him, and cried out, *I recant, I recant!* Yet this man, when reinforced in his Faith, and indued with power from above, was able within the space of a week after that sad foil, to die at the stake cheerfully; *Qui pro nobis mortem semel vixit, semper in nobis vincit*; He that once overcame death for us, 'tis he that always overcame death in us. And who should be thy song, but he that is thy strength? Applaud not thy self, but bless him. 'Tis one of God's Names, he is called the glory of his peoples strength, *Plal. 89. 17.* The more thou gloryest in God that gives thee strength to suffer for him, the less thou wilt boast of thy self: A thankful heart, and a proud, cannot dwell together in one bosom.

Thirdly, Consider what a foul blot Pride gives to all thy sufferings, where it is not bewailed and resisted; it alters the case. The old saying is, that 'tis not the punishment, but the cause makes the Martyr: We may safely say further, It is not barely the cause, but the sincere frame of the heart in suffering for a good cause, that makes a man a Martyr in God's sight. Though thou shouldest give thy body to be burnt, if thou hast not an humble heart of a sufferer for Christ, thou turnest Merchant for thy self. Thou deniest but one self, to set up another, runnest the hazard of thy estate and life to gain some applause, may be, and rear up a monument to thy honour in the opinions of men; thou doest no more in this case than a souldier who for name of valour will venture into the mouth of death and danger, only thou shewest thy pride under a religious disguise, but that helps it not but makes it the worse. If thou wilt in thy sufferings be a sacrifice acceptable to God, thou must not only be ready to offer up thy life for his truth, but sacrifice thy pride also, or else thou mayest tumble out of one fire into another, suffer here from man, as a seeming Champion for the Gospel, and in another world from God, for robbing him of his glory in thy sufferings.

SECT. III.

A third privilege is, When God flows in with more than ordinary manifestations of his love, then the Christian is in danger of having his heart secretly lift up in Pride. Indeed the genuine and natural effect, which such discoveries of Divine love have on a gracious soul, is to humble it. The sight of mercy increaseth the sense of sin, and that sense

dissolves the soul kindly into sorrow, as we see in *Magdalen*. The heart which possibly was hard and frozen in the shade, will give and thaw in the Sunshine of love, and so long all pride is hid from the creatures eye. Then (saith God, *Ezek. 36. 31.*) *ye shall remember your ways and your doings, that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, &c.* And when shall this be, but when God would save them from all their uncleannels? as appears, *verse. 25.* yet notwithstanding this, there remain such dregs of corruption unpurged out of the best, that Satan finds it not impossible to make the manifestations of Gods love an occasion of pride to the Christian: and truly God lets us see our proneness to this sin in the short stay he makes, when he comes with any greater discoveries of his love. The Comforter ('tis true) abides for ever in the Saints bosom, but his joys they come, and are gone again quickly. They are as exceedings, with which he feasts the Believer, but the cloth is soon drawn; and why so? bet because we cannot bear them for our every day food. A short interview of Heaven, and a vision of love now and then upon the mount of an Ordinance or affliction, cheers the spirits of drooping Christians, who, might they have leave to build Tabernacles there, and dwell under a constant shine of such manifestations, would be prone to forget themselves, and think they were Lords of their own comforts. If holy *Paul* was in danger of falling into this distemper of pride from his short rapture, to prevent which, God saw it needful to let him bleed with a thorn in the flesh; would not our blood much more grow too rank, and we too crank and wanton, if we should feed long on such luscious food? And therefore, if ever (Christian) thou hadst need to watch, then is the time when comforts abound, and God dandles thee most on the knee of his love, when his face shines with clearest manifestations, lest this sin of pride (as a thief in the Candle) should swail out thy joy. To prevent which, thou shouldest do well, First, to look that thou measurest not thy grace by thy comfort, lest so thou beest led into a false opinion that thy grace is strong, because thy comforts are so. Satan will be ready to help forward such thoughts as a fit medium to lift thee up, and slacken thy care in duty for the future. Such discoveries do indeed bear witness to the truth of thy grace, but not to the degree and measure of it; the weak child may be, yea, is oftner in the lap than the strong. Secondly do not so much applaud thy self in thy present comfort, as labour to improve it for the glory of God, *Up and eat*, saith the Angel to the Prophet, *because the journey is too great for thee.* The manifestations of Gods love are to fit us for our work. It is one thing to joyce in the light of our comfort, and another to go forth in the power of the Spirit comforting us (as Gyants refreshed with this Wine) to run our race of duty and obedience with more strength and alacrity. He shews his pride that spends his time in telling his money meerly to see how rich he is; but he his wisdom that lays out his money and trades with it. The boaster of his comforts will lose what he hath, when he that improves his comforts in a fuller trade

of duty shall adde more to what he hath. Thirdly, Remember thou dependest on God for the continuance of thy comfort. They are not the similes thou hadst yesterday can make thee joyous to day, any more than the bread thou didst then eat can make thee strong without more; thou needest new discoveries for new comforts: Let God hide his face, and thou wilt soon lose the sight, and forget the taste of what thou even now hadst. It is beyond our skill or power to preserve those impressions of joy, and comfortable apprehensions of Gods favour on our spirit, which sometimes we find; as Gods presence brings those, so when he goes he carries them away with him, as the setting Sun doth the day. We would laugh heartily at him, who when the Sun shines in at his window, should think by shutting that to imprison the Sun-beams in his Chamber; and dost thou not shew as much folly, who thinkest because thou now hast comfort, thou therefore shalt never be in darkness of spirit more? The Believers comfort is like *Israel's Manna*, 'tis not like our ordinary bread and provision we buy at Market, and lock up in our Cup-boards, where we can go to it when we will: no, it is rained as that was from Heaven. Indeed God provided for them after this sort to humble them, *Deut. 8. 16. Who fed thee in the Wilderness with Manna, which thy Fathers knew not, that he might humble thee.* It was not because such mean food that God is said to humble them, for it was delicious food, therefore called *Angels food*, *Psal. 78. 25.* such as if Angels did eat might serve them. But the manner of the dispensing it, from hand to mouth, every day their portion and no more, so that God kept the Key of their Cup-board, they stood to his immediate allowance; and thus God communicates our spiritual comforts for the same end to humble us. So much for this second sort of spiritual wickedness.

I had thought to have instanced in some other, as hypocrisy, unbelief, morality; but possibly the subject being general, what I have already said may be thought but a digression, and that too long.

I shall therefore conclude this branch of spiritual

wickedness, in a word to those who are yet in a natural and un sanctified state, which is to stir them up from what I have said (concerning Satans assaulting Believers with such Temptations) to consider seriously, how that Satans chief design against them also lies in the same sins. These are the wickednesses he labours to ingulph you in above all others. If ever you perish, it will be by the hand of these sins. 'Tis your scared conscience, blind mind, and dedolent impenitent heart will be your undoing, if you miscarry finally. Other sins, the Devil knows, are preparatory to these, and therefore he draws thee into them to bring thee into these. Two ways they prepare a way to spiritual sins; First, as they naturally dispose the sinner to them, 'tis the nature of sin to blind the mind, stupifie the conscience, harden the heart, as is implied; *Hebrews 3. 13. Left your heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* As the feet of travellers beat the high-way hard, so does walking in carnal gross sins the heart; they benumb the conscience, so that in time the sinner loses his feeling, and can carry his lusts in his heart, (as Bedlams their pins in their very flesh) without pain and remorse. Secondly, as they do provoke God by a judiciary act to give them up to these sins, *Lam. 3. 65. Give them obstinacy of heart,* (so 'tis in the margin) *thy curse unto them.* And when the Devil hath got sinners at this pass, then he hath them under lock and key. They are the fore-runners of damnation; if God leave thy heart hard and unbroken up, 'tis a sad sign he means not to sow the seed of grace there. O sinners pray (as he did request Peter for him) that none of these things may come upon you; which that they may not, take heed thou rejectest not the offers he makes to soften thee. Gods hardning is a consequent of, and a punishment for our hardning our own hearts. 'Tis most true what *Prophet saith, Potest homo invium amittere temporalia, non nisi volens amittere spiritualia*: A man may lose temporals against his will, but not spirituals; God will harden none, damn none against their will.

CHAP. IX.

Sheweth what the Prize is, which Believers wrestle against these Principalities, Powers, and Spiritual wickednesses for;

In High Places.

SECT. I.

THESE Words contain the last Branch in the description of our grand enemy, which have in them some ambiguity, the *Adjective* being only express'd in the Original; *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*, that is, in heavenlies; the phrase being defective, our Translators read it in high or heavenly places, as if the Apostle intended to set out the advantage of place which this our enemy, by being above us, hath of us. Indeed this way most interpreters go, yet some both ancient and modern read the words, not, in heavenly places, but *in heavenly things*. *Ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις* (saith *Oecumenius*) is as much as if the Apostle had said, *Ἡμεῖς πάλιν ὡς καὶ μικρὸν τιμὴν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἅλ' ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις πρᾶγματον*. We wrestle not for small and trivial things, but for heavenly, yea, for heaven it self, and our Adoption, as he goes on. The same way *Chrysostom* carries it, *in celestibus, id est, pro celestibus Dei*. And after him *Masculus*, and other modern Writers. The reasons which are given for this interpretation are weighty.

First, The Word else-where indefinitely set down, is taken for things, not places, *Heb. 8. 5*. Nay, one observes this word to be used almost twenty times in the New Testament, and never for any aerial place, but always for things truly heavenly and spiritual*; the word indeed properly signifies *super-celestial*, and if applied to places, would signify that where the Devil never came since his fall.

Lastly, There seems no great Argument to render Satan formidable by his being above us in place; 'tis some advantage indeed to men to gain the hill, or be above their enemy in some place of strength, but none at all to spirits; but now take it of things, and then it adds weight to all the other Branches of the Description. We wrestle with Principalities and Powers, and spiritual wickedness, and against all these, not for such toys and trifles as the earth affords, which are inconsiderable whether to keep or lose; but for such as Heaven holds forth, such an enemy, and such a prize, makes it matter of our greatest care how to manage the combat. The word thus opened, the Note will be this.

SECT. II.

Doct. The chief prize for which we wrestle against Satan is heavenly. Or thus, Satans main

design is to spoil and plunder the Christian of all that is heavenly. Indeed all the Christian hath, or desires as a Christian, is heavenly; the world is extrinsecal, both to his being and happiness; it is a stranger to the Christian, and intermeddles not with his joy nor grief. Heap all the riches and honours of the world upon a man, they will not make him a Christian; heap them upon a Christian, they will not make him a better Christian. Again, take them all away, let every Bird have his Feather, when stript and naked he will still be a Christian, and may be, a better Christian. It was a notable speech of *Erasmus*, if spoken in earnest, and his wit were not too quick for his Conscience, *Nihil magis ambio opes & dignitates, quam clumbus equus graves sarcinas*; he said, He desired wealth and honour no more than a feeble horse doth a heavy Cloak-bag. And I think every Christian in his right temper would be of his mind. Satan should do the Saint little hurt, if he did bend his forces only or chiefly against his outward enjoyments; alas, the Christian doth not value them, or himself by them; this were as if one should think to hurt a man by beating of his Cloaths when he hath put them off. So far as the Spirit of Grace prevails in the heart of a Saint, he hath put off the world in the desire of it, and enjoys it, so that these blows are not much felt; and therefore they are his heavenly treasures which are the booty Satan waits for.

SECT. III.

First, The Christians nature is heavenly, born from above; as Christ is the Lord from heaven, so all his off-spring are heavenly and holy: now Satans design is to debase and deflower this, 'tis the precious life of this new creature that he hunts for; he hath lost that beauty of holiness which once shone so gloriously on his Angelical nature; and now like a true Apostate he endeavours to ruine that in the Christian, which he hath lost himself. The seeds of this war are sown in the Christians nature; you are holy, that he cannot endure, *Miles feri faciem*, was *Cesar's* speech, when to fight with the Roman Citizens, he bid his Soldiers strike at their face; These Citizens (said he) love their beauty, mar that and mar all. The Soul is the Face whereon Gods Image is stamped: holiness

holiness is the beauty of this face, which makes us indeed like God; this Satan knows God loves, and the Saint is chary of; and therefore he labours to wound and disfigure this, that he may at once glory in the Christians shame, and pour contempt upon God in breaking his image; and is it not worth engaging limb and life in batrel against this enemy, who would rob us of that which makes us like God himself? Have you forgot the bloody Articles of peace that *Nabash* offered to the men of *Jabesh-Gilead*? no peace to be had, except they would let him thrust out their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all *Israel*, which how it was entertained, read *1 Sam. 11. 6.* The face is not so deformed that hath lost its eye, as the soul is that loseth its holiness; and no peace to be expected at Satans hands except he may deprive us of this; Methinks at the thought of this the Spirit of the Lord should come upon the Christian, and his anger should be kindled much more against this cursed spirit, than *Saul's* and the men of *Israel's* was against *Nabash*.

Secondly, The Christians trade is heavenly; the Merchandize he deals for is of the growth of that heavenly Country, *Phil. 3. 20.* *Our conversation is in heaven.* Every mans conversation is futable to his Calling; he whose trade is heavenly, follows that close. *Every man minds his own business,* the Apostle tells us. You may possibly find a Tradesman out of his shop now and then, but he is as a Fish out of the water, never in his Element till he be in his Calling again. Thus when the Christian is about the world, and the Worldling about heavenly matters, both are men out of their way, not right girt, till they get into their employment again. Now this heavenly trade is that which Satan doth in an especial manner labour to stop. Could the Christian enjoy but a free trade with heaven a few years without molestation, he would soon grow a rich man, too rich indeed for earth; but what with losses sustained by the hands of this Pirate Satan, and also the wrong he receives by the treachery of some in his own bosom (that like unfaithful servants hold correspondence with this Robber) he is kept but low in this life, and much of his gains are lost. Now the Christians heavenly trade lies either within doors or abroad; he can be free in neither, Satan is at his heels in both.

First, Within doors. This I may call his home-trade, which is spent in secret between God and his own Soul; here the Christian drives an unknown trade, he is at heaven and home again, richly laden in his thoughts with heavenly meditations, before the world knows where he hath been. Every Creature he sees is a Text for his heart to raise some spiritual matter and observations from: Every Sermon he hears, cuts him out work to make up and enlarge upon when he gets alone. Every Providence is as wind to his sails, and sets his heart a moving in some heavenly affection or other, futable to the occasion. One while he is wrapped up with joy in the consideration of mercy, another while melted into godly sorrow from the sense of his sins. Sometimes exalting God in his praises,

anon abasing himself before God for his own vileness. One while he is at the breast of the Covenant, milking out the consolations of the Promises; another while working his heart into an holy awe and fear of the threatenings. Thus the Christian walks aloft, while the base worldling is licking the dust below. One of these heavenly pearls which the Christian trades for is more worth, than the worldling gets with all his sweat and travel in his whole life. The Christians feet stand where other mens heads are; he treads on the Moon, and is clothed with the Sun; he looks down on earthly men (as one from an high hill doth upon those that live in some Fen or Moor) and sees them buried in a Fog of carnal pleasures and profits, while he breathes in a pure heavenly air, but yet not so high as to be free from all storms and tempests; many a sad gust he hath from sin and Satan without. What else mean those sad complaints and groans which come from the children of God, that their hearts are so dead and dull, their thoughts so roving and unfixed in duty, many times so wicked and filthy, that they dare hardly tell what they are, for fear of staining their own lips, and offending the ears of others by naming them? Surely the Christian finds it in his heart to will & desire he could meditate, pray, hear, and live after another sort than this, doth he not? yes, I durst be his Surety he doth. But so long as there is a Devil tempts, and we continue within his Walk, it will be thus more or less; as fast as we labour to clear the Spring of our hearts, he will be labouring to royle or stop it again: So that we have two works to do at once, to perform a duty, and watch him that opposeth us; Trowel and Sword both in our hands. They had need work hard indeed, who have others continually endeavouring to pull down, as they are labouring to rear up the building.

Secondly, That part of the Christians trade which lies abroad, is heavenly also. Take a Christian in his Relations, Calling, Neighbourhood, he is a heavenly trader in all; the great business of his life is to be doing or receiving some good; that company is not for him, that will neither give nor take this. What should a Merchant be where there is no buying nor selling? Every one labours (as his calling is) to seat himself where trade is quickest, and he is likest to have most takings. The Christian (where he may chuse) takes such in relations near to himself (Husband, Wife, Servants) as may suit with his heavenly trade, and not such as will be a pull-back to him: He falls in with the holiest persons as his dearest acquaintance; if there be a Saint in the Town where he lives, he'll find him out, and this shall be the man he will comfort with; and in his conversation with these and all else, his chief work is for heaven, his heavenly principle within inclines him to it. Now this alarms Hell: What, not contented to go to heaven himself, but by his holy example, gracious speeches, sweet counsels, seasonable reproofs, will he be trading with others, and labour to carry them along with him also? This brings the Lion fell and mad out of his den; such to be sure, shall find the Devil in their way to oppose them. *I should have come (saith Paul) but*

SATAN

Satan hindered me. He that will vouch God, and let it appear by the tenure of his conversation that he trades for him, shall have enemies enough, if the Devil can help him to such.

Thirdly, The Christians hopes are all heavenly; he sets not upon any thing the world hath to give him. Indeed, he would think himself the most miserable man of all others, if here were all he could make of his Religion. No, 'tis Heaven and eternal life that he expects, and though he be so poor as not to be able to make a Will of a Groat, yet he counts himself a greater heir, than if he were child to the greatest Prince on earth. This inheritance he sees by faith, and can rejoice in the hope of the glory which it will bring him. The masquerade and cheating glory of the great ones of this world, moves him not to envy their fanciful pomp; but when on the dunghill himself, he can forget his own present sorrows to pity them in all their bravery, knowing that within a few days the cross will be off his back, and the Crowns off their heads together; their portion will be spent, when he shall be to receive all his. These things entertain him with such joy, that they will not suffer him to acknowledge himself miserable, when others think him, and the Devil tells him he is such. This, this torments the very soul of the Devil, to see the Christian under sail for Heaven, fill'd with the sweet hope of his joyful entertainment when he comes there; and therefore he raiseth what storms and tempests he can, either to hinder his arrival in that blessed Port, (which he most desires, and doth not wholly despair of) or at least to make it a troublesome Winter-Voyage, such as *Pauls* was, in which they suffered so much loss. And this indeed very often he obtains in such a degree, that by his violent impetuous temptations beating long upon the Christian, he makes him throw over much precious lading of his joys and comforts; yea, sometimes he brings the soul through stress of temptation to think of quitting the Ship, while for the present all hope of being saved seems to be taken away. Thus you see what we wrestle with Devils for. We come to *Application*.

SECT. IV.

Use 1. This is a word of reproof to four sorts of persons.

First, to those that are so far from wrestling against Satan for this heavenly prize, that they resist the offer of it. Instead of taking Heaven by force, they keep it off by force. How long hath the Lord been crying in our streets, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*? How long have Gospel-offers rung in our ears, and yet to this day many Devil-deluded souls furiously drive on towards Hell, and will not be persuaded back, who refuse to be called the children of God, and chuse rather the Devils bondage than the glorious liberty with which Christ would make them free, esteeming the pleasures of sin for a season greater treasures than the riches of Heaven. 'Tis storied of *Cato* (who was *Cæsars* bitter enemy) that when he saw *Cæsar* prevail, rather than fall into his hand and stand to his

mercy, he laid violent hands on himself; which *Cæsar* hearing of, passionately broke out into these words, *O Cato, cur invidisti mihi salutem meam?* *O Cato*, why didst thou envy me the honour of saving thy life? And do not many walk as if they grudged Christ the honour of saving their souls? What other account can you give, sinners, of rejecting his grace? Are not Heaven and happiness things desirable, and to be preferred before sin and misery? Why then do you not embrace them? or are they the worse, because they come swimming to you in the blood of Christ? Oh how ill must Christ take it to be thus used, when he comes on such a gracious embassy? May he not say to thee, as once he did to those Officers sent to attach him, *Do you come out against me as a thief with swords and staves?* If he be a thief, 'tis only in this, that he would steal your sins from you, and leave Heaven in the room. Oh, for the love of God think what you do; 'tis eternal life you put away from you, in doing of which, *you judge your selves unworthy of it*, *Act. 13.46.*

Secondly, It reproves those who are Satans instruments to rob souls of what is heavenly. Among Thieves there are some ye call *Setters*, who enquire where a booty is to be had; which when they have found, and know such a one travels with a charge about him, then they employ some other to rob him, and are themselves not seen in the business. The Devil is the grand *Setter*, he observes the Christian how he walks, what place and company he frequents, what grace or heavenly treasure he carries in his bosom; which when he hath done, he hath his instruments for the purpose to execute his design. Thus he considered the admirable graces of *Job*, and casts about how he might best rob him of his heavenly treasure: And who but his Wife and Friends must do this for him? (well knowing that his tale would receive credit from their mouths.) O friends, ask your consciences whether you have not done the Devil some service of this kind in your days. Possibly you have a child or servant who once lookt heaven-ward, but your brow-beating of them scared them back, and now (may be) they are as carnal as you would have them: Or possibly thy Wife, before acquainted with thee, as full of life in the ways of God; but since she hath been transplanted into thy cold soil, what by thy frothy speeches and unfavoury conversation, at best thy worldliness and formality, she is now both decayed in her graces, and a loser in her comforts. O man, what an indictment will be brought against thee for this at Gods Bar? You would come off better, were it for robbing one of his money and jewels, than of his graces and comforts.

Thirdly, It reproves the woful negligence most shew in labouring for this heavenly prize. None but would be glad their souls might be saved at last; but where is the man or woman that makes it appear by their vigorous endeavour, that they mean in earnest? What warlike preparation do they make against Satan, (who lies between them and home?) Where are their arms, where their skill to use them, their resolution to stand to them, and

conscionable

conscience care to exercise themselves daily in the use of them? Alas, this is rarity indeed; not to be found in every house where the Profession of Religion is hanged out at the door. If woudling and wishing would bring them to Heaven, then they may come thither; but as for this wrestling and fighting, this making Religion our business, they are as far from these, as at last they are like to be from Heaven. They ate of his mind in Tully, who in a Summers day, as he lay lazing himself on the grass, would say, *O nimiam hoc esset laborare!* O that this were to work, that I could lie here and do my day-labour! Thus many melt and waste their lives in sloth, and say in their hearts; O that this were the way to Heaven! but will use no means to furnish themselves with Grace for such an enterprise. I have read of a great Prince in Germany, invaded by a more potent enemy than himself, yet from his Friends and Allies (who flock'd in to his help) he soon had a goodly Army, but had no money (as he said) to pay them: but the truth is, he was loth to part with it, for which some in discontent went away, others did not vigorously attend his business, and so he was soon beaten out of his Kingdom, and his Coffers (when his Palace was rifled) were found thrackt with treasure. Thus he was ruined, as some sick men die, because unwilling to be at cost to pay the Physician. It will add to the misery of damned souls, when they shall have leisure enough to consider what they have lost in losing God; to remember what means, offers and talents they once had towards the obtaining of everlasting life, but had not a heart to use them.

Fourthly, It reproves those who make a great bulle and noise in Religion, who are forward in profession, very buisie to meddle with the strictest duties, as if Heaven had monopolized their whole hearts; but like the Eagle, when they tower highest, their prey is below, where their eye is also. Such a generation there ever was and will be, that mingle themselves with the Saints of God, who pretend Heaven, and have their outward garb faced and fringed (as it were) with heavenly speeches and duties, while their hearts are lined with hypocrisy, whereby they deceive others, and most of all themselves; such may be the worlds Saints, but Devils in Christs account. *Have not I chosen twelve, one of you is a Devil?* And truly, of all Devils, none so bad as the professing Devil, the preaching, praying Devil. O Sirs, be plain-hearted; Religion is as tender as your eye, it will not be jested with: Remember the vengeance which fell on *Belshazzar*, while he carowled in the Bowls of the Sanctuary. Religion and the duties of it are consecrated things, not made for thee to drink thy lusts out of. God hath remarkably appeared in discovering and confounding such as have prostituted sacred things to worldly ends. *Jezebel* fasts and prays, the better to devour *Naboth's* Vineyard, but was devoured by it. *Absolom* was as sick till he had ravished his fathers Crown; as his Brother *Amnon* till he had done the like to his Sister; and to hide his treason, he puts on a religious Cloak, and therefore begs leave to go and pay his Vow in

Hebron, when he had another game in chafe; and did he not fall by the hand of his hypocrisie? Of all men, their judgment is indorst with most speed, who silver over worldly or wicked enterprizes with heavenly semblances. Of this gang were those, *2 Pet. 2. 3.* concerning whom the Apostle saith, *Their damnation [number] not; and those, Ezek. 14. 7, 8.* to whom God saith, *I the Lord will answer him by my self, and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

Use 2. Secondly, Try whether they be heavenly things or earthly thou chiefly pursuest. Certainly, friends, we need not be so ignorant of our souls state and affairs, did we oftner converse with our thoughts, and observe the haunts of our hearts. We soon can tell what Dish pleasest our palate best; and may you not tell whether heaven or earth be the most savoury meat to your souls? And if you should ask how you might know whether heaven be the prize you chiefly desire, I would put you only upon this double trial.

First, Art thou uniform in thy pursuit? Dost thou contend for heaven, and that which leads to heaven also? Earthly things God is pleased to retail; all have some, none have all. But in heavenly treasure he will not break the whole piece, and cut it into remnants. If thou wilt have heaven, thou must have Christ; if Christ, thou must like his service as well as his sacrifice; no holiness, no happiness. If God would cut off so much as would serve mens turns, he might have Customers enough: *Balaam* himself likes one end of the piece, *he would die like a righteous man*, though live like a Wizard as he was; no, God will not deal with such peddling Merchants; that man alone is for God, and God for him, who will come roundly up to Gods offer, and take all off his hands. One fitly compares Holiness and Happiness to those two Sisters, *Leah* and *Rachel*. Happiness, like *Rachel*, seems the fairer (even a carnal heart may fall in love with that) but Holiness, like *Leah*, is the elder, and beautiful also, though in this life it appears with some disadvantage, her eyes being beare'd with tears of repentance, and her face furrowed with the works of mortification. But this is the law of that Heavenly Country, *That the younger Sister must not be bestowed before the elder*: We cannot enjoy fair *Rachel*, Heaven and Happiness, except we first embrace tender-eyed *Leahs* Holiness, with all her severe duties of Repentance and Mortification. Now, Sirs, how like you this method? Art thou content to marry Christ and his Grace, and then (serving an hard apprenticeship in temptations both of Prosperity and Adversity, enduring the heat of the one, and the cold of the other) to wait till at last the other be given into thy bosom?

Secondly, If indeed Heaven and heavenly things be the prize thou wrestlest for, thou wilt discover a heavenly deportment of heart, even in earthly things. Where-ever you meet a Christian, he is going to Heaven, Heaven is at the bottom of his lowest actions. Now observe thy heart in three particu-

particulars; In getting, in using, and in keeping earthly things, whether it be after a heavenly manner.

First, *In getting earthly things*. If Heaven be thy chief prize, then thou wilt be ruled by a heavenly Law in the gathering of these. Take a carnal wretch, and what his heart is set on, he will have though it be by hook or crook. A Lie fits *Gebazi's* mouth well enough, so he may fill his pockets by it. *Jezebel* dares mock God, and murder an innocent man for an acre or two of ground. *Absolom*, *regnandi causa*, what will he not do? Gods Fence is too low to keep a graceless heart in bounds, when the game is before him; but a soul that hath Heaven in his eye, is ruled by Heavens Law: he dares not step out of Heavens Road to take up a Crown, as we see in *Dauids* carriage towards *Saul*. Indeed, in so doing, he should cross himself in his own grand design, which is the glory of God, and the happiness of his own Soul in enjoying of him; upon these very terms the servants of God have refused to be rich and great in the world, when either of these lay at stake: *Moses* threw his Court-preferment at his heels, refusing to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter. *Abraham* scorned to be made rich by the King of *Sodom*, Gen. 14. 22. that he might avoid the suspicion of covetousness and self-seeking; it shall not be said another day, that he came to enrich himself with the spoil, more than to rescue his Kinsman. *Nehemiah* would not take the tax and tribute to maintain his state, when he knew they were a poor peeled people, *because of the fear of the Lord*. Dost thou walk by this rule? wouldst thou gather no more estate or honour than thou maist have with Gods leave, and will stand with thy hopes of Heaven?

Secondly, Dost thou discover a heavenly spirit in using these things?

First, The Saint improves his earthly things for an heavenly end. Where layest thou up thy treasure? dost thou bestow it on thy voluptuous paunch, thy Hawks and thy Hounds; or lockest thou it up in the bosom of Christs poor members? What use makest thou of thy honour and greatness, to strengthen the hands of the godly, or the wicked? And so of all thy other temporal enjoyments? A gracious heart improves them for God; when a Saint prays for these things, he hath an eye to some heavenly end. If *David* prays for life, it is not that he may live, but *live and praise God*, Psal. 119. 175. When he was driven from his regal Throne by the rebellious arms of *Absolom*, see what his desire was and hope, 2 Sam. 15. 25. *The King said to Zadock, Carry back the Ark of God into the City: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation*. Mark, not shew me my Crown, my Palace, but the Ark, the House of God.

Secondly, A gracious heart pursues earthly things with a holy indifferency, saving the violence and zeal of his spirit for the things of Heaven: He useth the former as if he used them not, with a kind of non-attendance; his head and heart is taken up with higher matters, how he may please God, thrive in his Grace, enjoy more intimate communion with

Christ in his Ordinances; in these he spreads all his Sails, plies all his Oars, strains every part and power. Thus we find *David* upon his full speed; *My soul pressed hard after thee*, Psal. 63. And before the Ark we find him dancing with all his might. Now a carnal heart is clean contrary; his zeal is for the world, and his indifferency in the things of God: He prays as if he did not pray, &c. He sweats in his shop, but chills and grows cold in his Closet: Oh how hard to pully him up to a duty of Gods worship, or to get him out to an Ordinance! No weather shall keep him from the Market; rain, blow or snow, he goes thither; but if the Church-path be but a little wet, or the air somewhat cold, tis apology enough for him if his Pew be empty. When he is about any worldly business, he is as earnest at it, as the idolatrous Smith in hammering of his Image, *Who (the Prophet saith) worketh it with the strength of his arms, yea, he is hungry and his strength faileth, he drinketh not, and is faint*, Isa. 44. 12. So zealous is the Muck-worm in his worldly employments, that he will pinch his carcase, and deny himself his repast in due season, to pursue that; the Kitchen there shall wait on the Shop: But in the worship of God, tis enough to make him sick of the Sermon, and angry with the Preacher, if he be kept beyond his hour; here the Sermon must give place to the Kitchen; for the man for his pleasures and carnal pastime, he tells no Clock at his sports, and knows not how the day goes; when night comes, he is angry that it takes him off: but at any heavenly work, O how is the man punished! time now hath got leaden heels, he thinks; all he does at a Sermon is to tell the Clock, and see how the Glas runs; if men were not willing to deceive themselves, surely they might know which way their heart goes by the swift motion, or the hard tugging and slow pace it stirs, as well as they know in a Boat whether they row against the Tide or with it.

Thirdly, The Christian useth these things with a holy fear, lest earth should rob heaven, and his outward enjoyments prejudice his heavenly interest; he eats in fear, works in fear: rejoiceth in his abundance with fear: as *Job* sanctified his Children by offering a Sacrifice, out of a fear lest they had sinned; so the Christian is continually sanctifying his earthly enjoyments by prayer, that so he may be delivered from the snare of them.

Thirdly, The Christian is heavenly in his keeping of earthly things. The same Heavenly Law which he went by in getting, he observes in holding them. As he dares not say he will be rich and honourable in the world, but if God will; so neither that he will hold what he hath, he only keeps them while his heavenly Father calls for them that at first gave them: If God will continue them to him, and entail them on his posterity too, he blesteth God, and so he desires to do also when he takes them away. Indeed Gods meaning in the great things of this world, which sometimes he throws in upon the Saints, is chiefly to give them the greater advantage of expressing their love to him, in denying them for his sake. God never intended by that strange Providence, in bringing

Moses

Moses to *Pharaoh's Court*, to settle him there in worldly pomp and grandeur (a carnal heart indeed would have expounded Providence, and interpreted it as a fair occasion put into his hands by God to have advanced himself into the Throne, (which some say he might in time have done) but as an opportunity to make his Faith and Self-denial more eminently conspicuous in throwing all these at his heels, for which he hath so honourable a remembrance among the Lords Worthies, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25. And truly a gracious soul reckons, he cannot make so much of his worldly interests any other way, as by offering them up for Christ's sake; however that Traitor thought *Mary's Ointment* might have been carried to a better Market, yet no doubt that good woman her self was only troubled that she had not one more precious to pour on her dear Saviours head. This makes the Christian ever to hold the sacrificing knife at the throat of his worldly enjoyments, ready to offer them up when God calls; over-board they shall go, rather than hazard a wrack to Faith or a good Conscience; he fought them in the last place, and therefore he will part with them in the first. *Naboth* will hazard the Kings anger (which at last cost him his life) rather than sell an Acre or two of Land which was his Birth-right. The Christian will expose all he hath in this world, to preserve his hopes for another.

Jacob in his march towards *Esau*, sent his servants with his Flocks before, and came himself with his Wives behind; if he can save any thing from his Brothers rage, it shall be what he loves best: If the Christian can save any thing, it shall be his soul, his interest in Christ and Heaven, and then no matter if the rest go; even then he can say, not as *Esau* to *Jacob*, I have ²⁷ a great deal, but as *Jacob* to him, ²⁸ I have all, *Gen.* 33. 9, 11. all I want, all I desire; as *David* expresseth it, *This is all my salvation, and all my desire*, *2 Sam.* 23. 5. Now try whether thy heart be tuned to this Note. Does Heaven give Law to thy earthly enjoyments? Wouldst thou not keep thy honour, estate, no, not life it self to prejudice thy heavenly nature and hopes? Which wouldst thou chuse, if thou couldst not keep both, a whole skin, or a sound Conscience? It was a strange answer, if true, which the Historian saith, *Henry* the Fifth gave to his Father, who had usurped the Crown, and now dying, sent for this his Son, to whom he said, Fair Son, take the Crown (which stood on his Pillow by his head) but God knows how I came by it. To whom he answered, I care not how you came by it; now I have it, I will keep it as long as my Sword can defend it. He that keeps Earth by wrong, cannot expect Heaven by right.

Henry
5th

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to the pursuit of Heaven and Heavenly things.

Use 3. **T**Hirdly, Is it Heaven and all that is heavenly that Satan seeks to hinder us of? Let this provoke us the more earnestly to contend for them. Had we to do with an enemy that came only to plunder us of earthly trifles, would honours, estates, and what this world affords us, stay his stomach, it might suffer a debate (in a soul that hath hopes of Heaven) whether it were worth fighting to keep this Lumber: but Christ and Heaven, these sure are too precious to part withal upon any terms. *Ask the Kingdom for him also*, said *Solomon* to *Bathsheba*, when she begged *Abishag* for *Adonijah*. What can the Devil leave thee worth, if he deprive thee of these? And yet I confess, I have heard of one, that wished God would let him alone, and not take him from what he had here: Vile Brute! the choice of a Swine, and not a man, that could chuse to wallow in the dung and ordure of his carnal pleasures, and wish himself for ever shut up with his swill in the Hogs Cote of this Dunghil earth, rather than leave these to dwell in Heavens Palace, and be admitted to no meaner pleasures than what God himself with his Saints enjoy. It were even just if God gave such Brutes as these a Swines face to their swinish hearts: But alas, how few then should we meet that would have the countenance of a man? the greatest part of the

world (even all that are carnal and worldly) being of the same mind, though not so impudent as that wretch, to speak what they think. The lives of men tell plain enough that they say in their hearts, it is good being here, that they wish they could build Tabernacles on earth for all the Mansions that are prepared in Heaven. The transgression of the wicked said in *David's* heart, that the fear of God was not before them; *Psal.* 36. 1. And may not the worldliness of a Muck-worm say in the heart of any rational man, that Heaven and heavenly excellencies are not before their eyes or thoughts? O what a deep silence is there concerning these in the conversations of men! Heaven is such a stranger to the most, that very few are heard to enquire the way thither, or so much as ask the question in earnest. What they shall do to be saved? The most express no more desires of attaining heaven, than those blessed souls now in Heaven do of coming again to dwell on earth; alas, their heads are full of other projects, they are either as *Israel*, scattered over the face of the earth to gather straw, or busied to pick that straw they have gathered, labouring to get the world, or pleasing themselves with what they have got. So that it is no more than needs to use some Arguments to call men off the world to the pursuit of Heaven, and what is heavenly.

R

First,

First, For earthly things, it is not necessary that thou hast them; that is necessary which cannot be supplied *per vicarium*, with somewhat besides it self. Now, there is no such earthly enjoyment, but may be supplied, as to make its room more desirable than its company. In Heaven there shall be light and no Sun, a rich Feast and yet no meat, glorious Robes and yet no Clothes, there shall want nothing, and yet none of this worldly glory be found there; yea, even while we are here, they may be recompenced; thou maist be under infirmities of body, and yet better than if thou hadst health: *The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, Isa. 33. 34.* Thou maist miss of worldly honour, and obtain with those Worthies of Christ, *Heb. 11.* a good report by faith, and that is a name better than of the great ones of the earth; thou maist be poor in the world, and yet rich in Grace: and *godliness with content is great gain.* In a word, if thou partest with thy temporal life, and findest an eternal, what dost thou lose by thy change? but heaven and heavenly things are such as cannot be recompenced with any other. Thou hast a heavenly soul in thy bosom, lose that, and where canst thou have another? There is but one heaven, misst that, and where can you take up your lodging but in hell? One Christ that can lead you thither, reject him, and there remains no more sacrifice for sin. O that men would think on these things. Go sinner to the world, and see what it can afford you in lieu of these; may be it will offer to entertain you with its pleasures and delights; O poor reward for the loss of Christ and Heaven! Is this all thou canst get? Doth Satan rob thee of Heaven and Happiness, and only give thee this Posie to smell on as thou art going to thy execution? Will these quench Hell-fire, or so much as cool those flames thou art falling into? Who but those that have fore-done their understandings, would take these toys and new nothings for Christ and Heaven? While Satan is pleasing your Fancies with these Rattles and Babbles, his hand is in your treasure, robbing you of that which is only necessary: 'Tis more necessary to be saved, than to be; better not to be, than to have a being in Hell.

Secondly, Earthly things are such, as it is a great uncertainty, whether with all our labour we can have them or not. The world, though so many thousand years old, hath not learn'd the Merchant such a method of trading, as that from it he may infallibly conclude he shall at last get an estate by his trade; nor the Courtier such rules of comporting himself to the humour of his Prince, as to assure him he shall rise. They are but few that carry away the prize in the worlds Lottery, the greater number have only their labour for their pains, and a sorrowful remembrance left them of their egregious folly, to be led such a wild-goose-Chace after that which hath deceived them at last. But now for Heaven and the things of Heaven, there is such a clear and certain rule laid down, that if we will but take the counsel of the Word, we can neither mistake the way, nor in that way miscarry of the end. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be upon*

them, and the whole Israel of God. There are some indeed who run, and yet obtain not this prize, that seek and find not, knock and find the door shut upon them; but it is, because they do it either not in the right manner, or in the right season. Some would have heaven, but if God save them, he must save their sins also, for they do not mean to part with them; and how Heaven can hold God and such company together, judge you: As they come in at one door, Christ and all those holy spirits with him would run out at the other. Ungrateful wretches that will not come to this glorious Feast; unless they may bring that with them which would disturb the joy of that blissful state, and offend all the Guests that sit at the Table with them; yea, drive God out of his own Mansion-house. A second sort would have heaven, but like him in *Ruth, chap. 4. v. 2, 3, 4.* who had a mind to his kinsman *Elimelech's* Land, and would have paid for the Purchase, but he liked not to have it by marrying *Ruth*, and so missed of it: Some seem very forward to have heaven and salvation, if their own righteousness could procure the same (all the good they do, and duties they perform, they lay up for this purchase) but at last perish, because they close not with Christ, and take not heaven in his right. A third sort are content to have it by Christ, but their desires are so impotent and listless, that they put them upon no vigorous use of means to obtain him, and so (like the sluggard) they starve, because they will not pull their hands out of their bosom of sloth to reach their food that is before them; for the world they have metal enough, and too much; they trudge far and near for that, and when they have run themselves out of breath, can stand and *pant after the dust of the earth*, as the Prophet phraseth it, *Amos 2. 7.* But for Christ, and obtaining interest in him, O how key-cold are they! there is a kind of Cramp invades all the powers of their souls when they should pray, hear, examine their hearts, draw out their affections in hungriings and thirstings after his Grace and Spirit. 'Tis strange to see how they who even now went full soop to the world, are suddenly becalm'd, not a breath of wind stirring to any purpose in their souls after these things; and is it any wonder that Christ and Heaven should be denied to them that have no more mind to them? Lastly, Some have zeal enough to have Christ and Heaven, but it is when the Master of the house is risen, and hath shut to the door; and truly then they may stand long enough rapping before any come to let them in. There is no Gospel preached in another world; but as for thee poor soul, who art persuaded to renounce thy lusts, throw away the conceit of thy own righteousness, that thou maist run with more speed to Christ, and art so possessed with the excellency of Christ, thy own present need of him, and salvation by him, that thou pantest after him more than life it self; in Gods name go on and speed, be of good comfort, he calls thee by name to come unto him, that thou maist have rest for thy soul. There is an Office in the Word where thou maist have thy soul and its eternal happiness ensured to thee. Those that come to him, as he will himself

in no wise cast away, so not suffer any other to pluck them away. *This day* (saith Christ to *Zaccheus*) *salvation is come to thy house*, Luke 19. 9. Salvation comes to thee, (poor soul) that openest thy heart to receive Christ, thou hast eternal life already, as sure as if thou wert a glorified Saint now walking in that heavenly City. O Sirs, if there were a free trade proclaimed to the *Indies*, enough gold for all that went, and a certainty of making a safe voyage, who would stay at home? But alas, this can never be had: all this, and infinitely more, may be said for Heaven; and yet how few leave their uncertain hopes of the world to trade for it? What account can be given for this, but the desperate atheism of mens heart? They are not yet fully perswaded whether the Scripture speaks true or not, whether they may rely upon the discovery that God makes in his Word of this new-found land, and those mines of spirituals there to be had, as certain. God open the eyes of the unbelieving world, (as he did the Prophets servants) that they may see these things to be realities not fictions; 'tis faith only that gives a being to these things in our hearts. By faith *Moses* saw him that was invisible.

Thirdly, Earthly things when we have them, we are not sure of them; like birds, they hop up and down, now on this hedge, and anon upon that, none can call them his own: rich to day, and poor to morrow; in health when we lye down, and arrested with pangs of death before midnight: Joyful Parents, one while solacing our selves with the hopes of our budding Posterity, and may be ere long knocks one of *Job's* messengers at our door to tell us they are all dead now in honour, but who knows whether we shall not live to see that buried in scorn and reproach? The Scripture compares the multitude of people to waters; the great ones of the world sit upon these waters, as the Ship floats upon the waves, so do their honours upon the breath and favour of the multitude; and how long is he like to sit that is carried upon a wave? One while they are mounted up to Heaven (as *David* speaks of the ship) and then down again they fall into the deep. *We have ten parts in the King* (say the men of *Israel*) 2 Sam. 19. 43. and in the very next Verse, *Sheba* doth but sound a Trumpet of sedition, saying, *We have no part in David, no inheritance in the Son of Jesse*, and the wind is in another corner presently: for 'tis said, *Every man of Israel went up from after David and followed Sheba*. Thus was *David* cryed up and down, and that almost in the same breath. Unhappy man he, that hath no surer portion than what this variable world will offer him! The time of mourning for the departure of all earthly enjoyments is at hand, we shall see them as *Eglon's* servants did their Lord, fallen down dead before us, and weep because they are not. What folly then is it to dandle this vain world in our affections, (whose joy like the Childs laughter on the Mothers knee, is sure to end in a cry at last) and neglect Heaven and heavenly things which endure for ever? O remember *Dives* stirring up his pillow, and composing himself to rest, how he was called up with the tidings of death before he was warm in

his bed of ease, and laid with sorrow on another, which God had made for him in flames, from whence we hear him roaring in the anguish of his conscience. O Soul, couldst thou but get an interest in the heavenly things we are speaking of, these would not thus slip from under thee; Heaven is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, Christ an abiding portion, his graces and comforts sure waters that fail not, but spring up unto eternal life. The Quails that were food for the *Israelites* lust soon ceased, but the Rock that was drink to their faith followed them; this Rock is Christ: make sure of him, and he will make sure of thee, he'll follow thee to thy sick-bed, and lye in thy bosom, cheering thy heart with his sweet comforts, when worldly joys lye cold upon thee, (as *David's* cloaths on him) and no warmth of comfort to be got from them. When thy outward senses are lock'd up that thou canst neither see the face of thy dear friends, nor hear the counsel and comfort they would give thee, then he will come (though these doors be shut) and say, Peace be to thee, my dear child, fear not Death or Devils, I stay to receive thy last breath, and have here my Angels waiting, that as soon as thy soul is breathed out of thy body, they may carry and lay it in my bosom of love, where I will nourish thee with those eternal joys that my blood hath purchased, and my love prepared for thee.

Fourthly, Earthly things are empty and unsatisfying. We may have too much, but never enough of them, they oft breed loathing, but never content, and indeed how should they, being so disproportionate to the vast desires of these immortal spirits that dwell in our bosoms? A spirit hath not flesh and bones, neither can it be fed with such; and what hath the world, but a few bones covered over with some fleshly delights, to give it? The less is blessed of the greater, not the greater of the less. These things therefore being so far inferiour to the nature of man, he must look higher if he will be blessed, even to God himself who is the Father of spirits. God intended these things for our use, not enjoyment: And what folly is it to think we can squeeze that from them, which God never put in them? They are breasts, that moderately drawn, yield good milk, sweet refreshing, but wring them too hard, and you will suck nothing but wind or blood from them. We lose what they have, by expecting to find what they have not: None find less sweetness and more dissatisfaction in these things, than those who strive most to please themselves with them. The cream of the creature floats atop; and he that is not content to sleet it, but thinks by drinking a deeper draught to find yet more, goes further to speed worse, being sure by the disappointment he shall meet, to pierce himself through with many sorrows. But all these fears might happily be escaped, if thou wouldst turn thy back on the Creature, and face about for Heaven: Labour to get Christ, and through him hopes of Heaven, and thou takest the right road to content; thou shalt see it before thee, and enjoy the prospect of it as thou goest, yea, find that every step thou drawest nearer and nearer to it: Oh what a sweet change wouldst thou find!

As a sick man coming out of an impure unwholesome Climate, where he never was well, when he gets into fresh air or his native soil; so wilt thou find a cheering of thy spirit, and reviving thy soul with unspeakable content and peace. Having once clofed with Christ, first the guilt of all thy sins is gone, and this spoil'd all thy mirth before: All your dancing of a Child, when some Pin pricks it, will not make it quiet, or merry; Well, now that Pin is taken out which robbed thee of the joy of thy life. Secondly, Thy nature is renewed and sanctified, and when is a man at ease, if not when he is in health? And what is Holiness, but the Creature restored to his right temper in which God created him? Thirdly, Thou becomest a Child of God, and that cannot but please thee well (I hope) to be Son or Daughter to so great a King. Fourthly, Thou hast a right to Heavens Glory, whither thou shalt ere long be conducted to take and hold possession of that thy inheritance for ever: And who can tell what that is? *Nicephorus* tells us of one *Agbarus*, a great man, that (hearing so much of Christs fame, by reason of the miracles he wrought) sent a Painter to take his Picture; and that the Painter when he came, was not able to do it, because of that radiancy of divine splendour which sat on Christs face. Whether this be true or no, I leave it; but to be sure, there is such a brightness on the face of Christ glorified, and that happiness which in Heaven Saints shall have with him, as forbids us that dwell in mortal flesh to conceive of it aright, much more to express; 'tis best going thither to be informed, and then we shall confess we on earth heard not half of what we there find, yea, and that our present conceptions are no

more like to that Vision of Glory we shall there have, than the Sun in the Painters Table, is to the Sun it self in the Heavens. And if all this be so, why then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, yea, for that which keeps you from that which can satisfy? Earthly things are like some trash, which do not only not nourish, but take away the appetite from that which would: Heaven and heavenly things are not relished by a soul vitiated with these. Manna, though for deliciousness called Angels food, yet but light bread to an Egyptian palate. But these spiritual things depend not on thy opinion, O man, whoever thou art (as earthly things in a great measure do) that the value of them should rise or fall as the worlds Exchange doth, and as vain man is pleased to rate them: Think Gold dirt, and it is so, for all the Royal stamp on it; Count the swelling titles of worldly honour (that proud dust so brags in) vanity, and they are such; but have base thoughts of Christ, and he is not the worse: Slight Heaven as much as you will, it will be Heaven still; and when thou comest so far to thy wits with the Prodigal, as to know which is best Fare, husks or bread; where's best living, among Hogs in the Field, or in thy Fathers house; then thou wilt know how to judge of these heavenly things better: Till then go and make the best market thou canst of the world, but look not to find this Pearl of price, true satisfaction to thy soul in any of the Creatures shops; and were it not better to take it when thou maist have it, than after thou hast wearied thy self in vain in following the creature, to come back with shame, and may be miss of it here also, because thou wouldst not have it when it was offered?

VERSE 13.

Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

THe Apostle in these words reassumes his former Exhortation mentioned, *ver. 11.* and presseth it with a new force, from that more particular discovery which he gives of the enemy, *ver. 12.* where like a faithful Scout, he makes a full report of Satans great power and malice, and also discloseth what a dangerous design he hath upon the Saints, no less than to despoil them of all that is heavenly: From all which he gives them a second Alarm, and bids them *Arm, arm! Wherefore take unto you, &c.* In the words consider,

First, The Exhortation with the Inference, *Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God.*

Secondly, The Argument with which he

urgeth the Exhortation, and that is double.

First, *That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.*

Secondly, *Having done all to stand;* that is, both able to fight, and able to conquer. As for the first general, *the Exhortation*, we shall wave it as to the substance of it, being the same with what we have handled, *v. 11.* Only there are two observables which we shall lightly touch. The one from the repetition of the very same Exhortation so soon, one Verse only interposed. The other from the Verb the Apostle useth here; which being not the same with *v. 11.* affords a different note. There it is, *Ἐνδυνασθε*, here, *ἀνταγωνισαίτην*.

CHAP. I.

The reason why the Apostle renews the same Exhortation ; and also what Truths Ministers are often to preach to their people.

First of the first, The repetition of the same Exhortation, and that in so short a space. Sure it was not for want of matter, but rather out of abundance of zeal, that he harps the second time on the same string. Indeed, he is the better workman, who drives one nail home with reiterated blows, than he which covets to enter many, but fastens none. Such Preachers are not likely to reach the Conscience, who hop from one truth to another, but dwell on none. Every hearer is not so quick as the Preacher, to take a notion as 'tis first darted forth ; neither can many carry away so much of that Sermon, which is made up all of varieties, (where a point is no sooner named, but presently pulls back its hand, and another makes a breach and comes forth, before the first hath been opened and hammered upon the conscience by a powerful application) as where the discourse is homogeneal, and some one necessary truth is cleared, insisted on, and urged home with blow upon blow ; Here the whole matter of the discourse is akin, and one part remembered brings the memory acquainted with the other ; whereas in the former one puts out the other in a weak memory. Short hints and away, may please a Scholar, but not so profitable for others ; the one more fit for the Schools, but the other for the Pulpit. Were I to buy a Garment in a Shop, I should like him better that lays one good piece or two before me that are for my turn, (which I may fully peruse) than him who takes down all his Shop, and heaps piece upon piece (merely to shew his store) till at last for variety I can look wishly on none, they lie so one upon another.

Again, As it is profitable thus to insist on truths, so 'tis not unbecoming a Minister to preach the same truths again and again : *Paul here goes over and over the same exhortation, v. 11. v. 13. and else where tells us, This is not grievous to him, but to them it is safe, to hear the same thing over and over, Phil. 3. 1.* There are three sorts of Truths must in our Ministry be preached oft.

First, *Fundamental Truths*, or, as we call them, Catechise-points, that contain truths necessary to be known and believed. The weight of the whole Building lies on these Ground-cells, more than on superstructure truths. In a Kingdom there are some Staple-Commodities and Trades, without which the Common-weal could not subsist, as Wooll, Corn, &c. in our Countrey ; and these ought to be encouraged above others, (which though they be an ornament to the Nation, yea, add to the riches of it, yet are not so necessary to the subsistence of it.) Thus here : There is an excellent use of our other Ministerial labours, as they tend to beautifie and adorn, yea, enrich the Christian with the know-

ledge of spiritual Mysteries ; but that which is chiefly to be regarded, is the constant faithful opening of those main truths of the Gospel ; These are the Land-marks, and shew us the bounds of truths : And as it is in Towns that butt one upon another, if the inhabitants do not sometimes perambulate, and walk the bounds, (to shew the youth what they are) when the old studs are gone, the next Generation may lose all their priviledges by their encroaching Neighbours, because not able to tell what is their own. There is no fundamental Truth, but hath some evil Neighbour, (Here I mean) butting on it ; and the very reason why a spirit of Error hath so encroached of late years upon Truth, is, because we have not walked the bounds with our people, in acquainting them with, and stablishing their judgements on these fundamental points, so frequently and carefully as is requisite. And people are much in the fault, because they cast so much contempt upon this work, that they count a Sermon on such points next to lost, and only child's meat.

Secondly, *Those Truths are oft to be preached, which Ministers observe to be most undermined by Satan or his instruments in the judgements or lives of their people.* The Preacher must read and study his people as diligently as any Book in his Study ; and as he finds them, dispense like a faithful Steward unto them. *Paul takes notice that the Galatians had been in ill handling by false Apostles, who had even bewitched them back to the Law in that great point of Justification, and see how he beats upon that point.* Our people complain, we are so much, so oft reproving the same error or sin ; and the fault is their own, because they will not leave it : Who will blame the Dog for continuing to bark, when the Thief is all the while in the Yard ? Alas, alas, it is not once or twice rowling against sin, will do it. When people think the Minister shews his laziness, because he preacheth the same things, he may then be exercising his patience, in continuing to exhort and reprove those who oppose, waiting if at last God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. We are bid to lift up our voice like a Trumpet ; and would you have us cease while the battel lasts, or found a retreat when it should be a battel ?

Thirdly, *Truths of daily use and practice.* These are like bread and salt ; whatever else is on, these must be on the board every meal. *Saint Peter was of this mind, 2 Pet. 1. 12. I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them.* He had (you may see) been speaking of such graces and duties, that they could not pass a day without the exercise of them, and therefore will be ever their monitor to stir up their pure

pure minds about them. All is not well, when a man is weary of his ordinary food, and nothing will go down but rarities; the stomach is sickly, when a man delights rather to pick some fallet, than eat of solid meat: And how far this dainty age is gone in this spiritual disease, I think few are so far come to themselves, as yet to consider and lament. O Sirs, be not weary as in doing, so not in hearing those savoury truths preached you have daily use of, because you know them, and have heard them often: Faith and repentance will be good Doctrine to preach and hear to the end of the world. You may as well quarrel with God because he hath made but one Heaven, and one way to it, as be offended with the Preacher for preaching these over and over. If thy heart were humble, and thy Palate spiritual, old truths would be new to thee every time thou hearest them. In Heaven the Saints draw all their Wine of joy (as I may so say) at one tap, and shall to all eternity, and yet it never tastes flat. God is that one object their souls are filled with, and never weary of; and can any thing of God and his love be wearisome to thee in the hearing here? I am not all this while an Advocate for any Loiterer in our Lords Vineyard, for any slothful servant in

the work of the Gospel, who wraps up his Talent in idleness, or buries it in the earth, (where (maybe) he is digging and playing the worldling all the week, and then hath nothing to set before his people on the Lords Day, but one or two mouldy loaves, which were kneaded many years before.) This is not the good Steward; here is the old, but where are the new things which he should bring out of his Treasure? If the Minister labours not to encrease his stock, he is the worst Thief in the Parish. It is wicked for a man trusted with the improving of Orphans Estates, to let them lye dead by him; much more for a Minister not to improve his gifts, (which I may call the Town-stock given for the good of the souls of both rich and poor.) If that Preacher was wise, Eccles. 12. 9. who still taught the people knowledge, that is, was ever going on, endeavouring to build them higher in knowledge, and that he might, did give good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs; then surely he will be proved a foolish Preacher at last, that wastes his time in sloth, or spends more of it in studying how to add to his Estate out of his peoples, than how to add to their gifts and graces, by a conscionable endeavour to increase his own.

CHAP. II.

The best of Saints subject to decline in their graces, and why we are to endeavour a recovery of decays in grace.

THE second Observable in the Exhortation, is taken from the Verb which the Apostle useth; *ἀναρπάζετε*, which signifies not only to take, but to take again, or recover a thing which we have lost, or reassume a thing which for the present we have left. Now the Apostle writing to the Saints at Ephesus, who (at least many of them) were not now to put on this Armour by a Conversion (or the first work of Faith, which no doubt had already past upon many among them:) He, in regard of them and Believers to the end of the world, hath a further meaning, i.e. That they would put on more clothes where this armour hangs loose, and they would recover where they have let fall any duty, or decayed in any grace. So that the Note is,

Doct. That the Christian should have an especial care to repair his broken armour, to recover his decaying graces. This armour may be battered; I might shew sad examples in the several pieces. Was not Jacob's girdle of truth and sincerity unbuckled, when he used that sinful policy to get the blessing? He was not the plain man then, but the supplanter; but he had as good have stayed Gods time; he was paid home in his own kind: He puts a cheat on his Father; and did not Laban put a cheat on him, giving Leah for Rachel? What say you to David's breast-plate of righteousness, in the matter

of Uriah? Was it not shot through, and that holy man fearfully wounded, who lay almost a year (for ought we read of him) before he came to himself, so far as to be thoroughly sensible of his sin, till Nathan a faithful Chirurgeon, was sent to search the wound, and clear it of that dead flesh which had grown over it? And Jonah, (otherwise a holy Prophet) when God would send him on an errand to Nineveh, he hath his shoes to seek, I mean that preparation and readiness with which his mind should have been skod, to have gone at the first call. Good Hezekiah, we find how near his helmet of hope was of being beaten off his head, who tells us himself, what his thoughts were in the day of his distress; that he should not see the Lord in the land of the living, expecting that God would never let go his hold, till like a Lion he had broke his bones, and at last made an end of him. Even Abraham himself, famous for faith, yet had his fits of unbelief and distrustful qualms coming over his valiant heart. Now in this case, the Christians care should be to get his armour speedily repaired: A battered helmet is next to no helmet, in point of present use: Grace in a decay, is like a man pulled off his legs by sickness; if some means be not used to recover it, little service will be done by it, or comfort received from it. Therefore Christ gives this Church of Ephesus (to whom Paul wrote

wrote this Epistle) this counsel, *To remember from whence she was fallen, to repent and do her first works.* How many does a declining Christian ~~walk~~ at once!

First, He wrongs God, and that in a high degree, because God reckons upon more honour to be paid him in by his Saints Grace, than by all other talents which his creatures have to trade with in the world. He can in some sense better bear the open sins of the world, than the decays of his Saints Graces: They by abusing their talents, rob him but of his Oil, Flax, and Wooll; but the Christian by the other, bereaves him of the glory which should be paid him from his Faith, Zeal, Patience, Self-denial, Sincerity, and the rest. Suppose a Master should trust one Servant with his Money, and another with his Child to be looked to; would he not be more displeased to see his dear Child hurt, or almost killed by the negligence of the one, than his Money stolen by the carelessness of the other? Grace is the new Creature, the birth of the Spirit; when this comes to any harm by the Christians careless walking, it must needs go nearer the heart of God, than the wrong he hath from the world, who are trusted with nothing like this.

Secondly, He that declines in Grace, and labours not to repair it, he wrongs his Brethren who have a share in one anothers Grace: He wrongs his whole body, that seeks not cure for a wound in any member. We are bid *to love one another, 2 Epist. John v. 5.* But how shall we shew our love to one another? The very next words will direct us; *And this is love, that we walk after his Commandments.* Indeed, we shew little love to our Brethren by sinning, whereby we are sure either to ensnare them, or grieve them: And how to let Grace go down, and sin not go up, is a riddle to any that know what they both are.

Thirdly, The Christian wrongs himself in not endeavouring to repair his broken Armour, and recover his declining Grace. By this he loses the Evidence of his inheritance, or at least so blots it, that it cannot be so clearly perceived by him. A declining Christian must needs be a doubting Christian, because the common symptom of an hypocrite is, to wear and waste like a stake set in the ground (which rots, while true grace like the tree grows.) Is not this the knot which the Devil poseth many poor souls withal, and finds them work

for many years to untie? If thou wert a Christian, thou wouldst grow. Right Saints go from strength to strength, and thou goest from strength to weakness. They go up the hill to Zion; every Ordinance and Providence is a step that bears them nearer heaven: But thou goest down the hill, and art further from thy salvation than when thou didst first believe (as thou thoughtest.) And doth it stand with thy wisdom, Christian, to put a staff into the Devils hand, an Argument into his mouth, to dispute against thy salvation with? If you held an estate by the life of a Child, which upon the death of it should all go away from you, that Child I warrant you, should be well looked unto; his head should not ake, but you would post to the Physician for counsel. I pray what is your evidence for that glorious estate you hope for? Is it not Christ within you? Is not this new creature (which may well be called Christ for its likeness to him) the young Heir of Heavens glory? And when that is sick or weak, is it not time to use all means for its recovery? While thus, thou canst neither live nor dye comfortably. Not live. A man in a Consumption has little joy of his life; he neither finds sweetness in his meat, nor delight in his work, as an healthful man doth. Oh how sweet is the promise to faith, when active and vigorous! how easie the yoke of the Command to the Christian, when his Conscience is not galled with guilt, nor his strength enfeebled by temptation? But the Christian in a declining condition, he tastes not the Promise; every Command is grievous, and every duty burdensome to him: He goes in pain, like one whose foot is out of joint, though the way be never so pleasant. And he is as unfit to dye, as he is to live! Such a one can like no more to hear the news of death, than a Tenant that wants his Rent, doth to hear of the Quarter-day. This made David beg time of God; *Spare me a little, that I may recover my strength.*

Having shewn you, why the Christian should endeavour to recover his declining Graces, it will be very requisite to give a word of counsel to the Christian.

First, To direct him how to judge of the declining state of Grace, that he may not pass a false judgement upon himself therein.

Secondly, To direct him when he finds Grace to be in a declination, how he may recover it.

CHAP. III.

A Cautionary Direction from what we may not, as also from what we may judge our graces to be in a Declination.

Quest. **F**irst of the first, *How may a Christian judge, whether grace be declining in him, or no?*

Ans. First, I shall resolve this negatively, and shew by what he is not to judge his grace to decline.

Secondly, Positively, by what he may certainly conclude a decay of grace.

First, Negatively, and that in several particulars.

First, Christian, do not judge grace to be fallen weaker, because thy sense of corruption is grown stronger: This oft lies at the bottom of poor souls complaints in this case; Oh, they never felt pride, hypocrisy, and other corruptions so haunt them, as now; none knows how they are vexed with these and the like, besides themselves. Now let me ask thee who makest this sad moan, whether thou dost not think these corruptions were in thee before thou didst thus feel them? How oft hast thou prayed as formally, and not been troubled? How oft hast thou stood chatting with the same lusts, and thy soul hath not been laid low before the Lord with such abasement of thy self as now? Deal faithfully between God and thy soul, and tell not a lye for God, by bearing false witness against thy self. If it be thus, thou hast rather a comfortable sign of grace growing, than decaying: Sin cannot be on the getting hand, if the sense of sin grow quick: This is the concomitant of a thriving soul; none so full of complaints of their own hearts, as such; the least sin goes now to their very souls, which makes them think viler of themselves than ever; but it is not the increase of sin in them, but the advance of their love to Christ makes them judge so. When the Sun shines with some power, and the year gets up, we observe, though we may have frost and snow, yet they do not lye long, but are soon dissolved by the Sun. Oh 'tis a sweet sign that the love of Christ shines with a force upon thy soul, that no corruptions can lye long in thy bosom, but they melt into sorrow and bitter complaints. That is the decaying soul, where sin lyes bound up and frozen, little sense of, or sorrow for it appears.

Secondly, Take heed thou thinkest not grace decays, because thy comfort withdraws. The influence of the Sun comes where the light of it is not to be found, yea, is mighty, as appears in those Mines of Gold and Silver which are concocted by the same. And so may the actings of grace be vigorous in thee, when least under the shines of his countenance. Did ever faith triumph more than in our Saviour, crying, *My God, my God!* Here Faith was at its Meridian, when it was midnight in respect of joy. Possibly thou comest from an Ordinance, and bringest not home with thee

those sheaves of comfort thou usest to do, and therefore concludest, grace acted not in thee as formerly. Truly, if thou hast nothing else to go by, thou maist wrong the grace of God in thee exceedingly; because thy comfort is extrinsecal to thy duty, a boon which God may give or not, yea, doth give to the weak, and deny to the strong. The Traveller may go as fast, and ride as much ground, when the Sun doth not shine, as when it doth; (though indeed he goes not so merrily on his journey;) nay, sometimes he makes the more haste; the warm Sun makes him sometime to lye down and loiter; but when dark and cold, he puts on with more speed. Some graces thrive best (like some flowers) in the shade, such as humility, dependence on God, &c.

Thirdly, Take heed thou dost not mistake, and think thy grace decays, when may be 'tis only thy temptations encrease, and not thy grace decrease. If you should hear a man say, because he cannot to day run so fast, when a hundred weight is on his back, as he could yesterday without any such a burden, that therefore he was grown weaker; you would soon tell him where his mistake lies. Temptation lies not in the same heaviness alway upon the Christians shoulder: Observe therefore whether Satan is not more than ordinary let loose to assault thee, whether thy temptations come not with more force and violence than ever; possibly, though thou dost not with the same facility overcome these, as thou hast done less, yet grace may act stronger in conflicting with the greater, than in overcoming the less. The same Ship, that when lightly ballasted and favoured with the Wind, goes mounting, at another time deeply laden, and going against Wind and Tide, may move with a slow pace, and yet they in the Ship take more pains to make it sail thus, than they did when it went faster.

Secondly, Positively, how thou maist conclude that grace is declining; and that in a threefold respect.

First, In reference to temptations to sin.

Secondly, In reference to the duties of Gods worship.

Thirdly, The frame of thy heart in worldly employments.

First, In reference to sin; and that is threefold.

First, When thou art not so wakeful to discover the encroachings of sin upon thee as formerly. At one time we find *David's* heart smote him, when he but rent the skirt of *Saul's* Garment: At another time when his eye glanced on *Barshheba*, he takes no such notice of the inare Satan had him in, and so is led from one sin to another; which plainly shews that grace in him was heavy-eyed, and his heart not in so holy a frame as it had been. If an Enemy comes

comes up to the Gates, and the Sentinel not so much as give an alarm to the City of his approach, it shews he is off his Guard, either fallen asleep, or worse: If grace were awake, and thy conscience had not contracted some hardness, it would do its office.

Secondly, When a temptation to sin is discovered, and thou findest thy heart shut up that thou dost not pray against it, or not with that zeal and holy indignation as formerly upon such occasions; it is a bad sign, that lust hath got an advantage of thy grace, that thou canst not readily betake thy self to thy arms. Thy affections are bribed, and this makes thee so cold a suitor at the Throne of Grace, for help against thine Enemy.

Thirdly, When the arguments prevailing most with thee to resist temptations to sin, or to mourn for sin committed, are more carnal and less evangelical than formerly. May be thou remembrest when thy love to Christ would have spit fire on the face of Satan tempting thee to such a sin; but now that holy fire is so abated, that if there were not some other carnal motives to make the vote full, it would hazard to be carried for it, rather than against it. And so in mourning for a sin, there is possibly now some slavish Arguments (like an Onion in the eye) which makes thee weep, rather than pure ingenuity arising from love to God whom thou hast offended. This speaks a sad decay; and the more mixture there is of such carnal Arguments, either in the resisting of, or mourning for sin, the greater the declination of grace is. David's natural heat fire was much decayed, when he needed so many cloaths to be laid on him, and he yet feel so little heat; the time was he would have sweat with fewer. I am afraid, many their love to Christ will be found (in these declining times) to have lost so much of its youthful vigour, that what would formerly have put them into a holy fury and burning zeal against some sins (such as Sabbath-breaking, pride of Apparel, neglect of Family-duties, &c.) hath now much ado to keep any heat at all in them against the same.

Secondly, In point of Duties of worship.

First, If thy heart doth not prompt thee with that forwardness and readiness as formerly, to hold communion with God in any duty: Possibly thou knowest the time when thy heart echoed back to the motions of Gods Spirit, bidding thee, *Seek his face; Thy face, Lord, will I seek*; yea, thou didst long as much till a Sabbath or Sermon-season came, as the carnal wretch doth till it be gone; but now thy pulse doth not beat so quick a march to the Ordinances publick or secret. Nature cannot but decay, if appetite to food go away: A craving soul is the thriving soul, such a Child that will not let his Mother rest, but is frequently crying for the breast.

Secondly, When thou declinest in thy care to perform duties in a spiritual sort, and to preserve the sense of those more inward failings, which in duty none but thy self can check thee of. It is not frequency in duty, but spirituality in duty, causeth thriving; and therefore neglect in this point soon

brings grace into a consumptive posture. Possibly, soul, the time was thou wert not satisfied with praying, but thou didst watch thy heart strictly, (as a man would every piece in a Sum of Money he pays, lest he should wrong his friend with any Brags or uncurrent Coyn) thou wouldst have God not only have duty, but duty stamp't with that faith which makes it current, have that zeal and sincerity which makes it Gospel-weight; but now thou art more careless and formal; Oh look to it (poor soul) thou wilt, if thou continue thus careless, melt in thy spiritual estate apace; such dealings will spoil thy Trade with Heaven, God will not take off these slighty duties at thy hands.

Thirdly, When a Christian gets little spiritual nourishment from communion with God, to what he hath done. The time hath been (it may be) thou couldst shew what came of thy praying, hearing and fasting; but now the case is altered. There is a double strength communion with God imparts to a soul in a healthful disposition; strength to faith, and strength for our obediencial walking. Dost thou hear and pray, and get no more strength to hold by a Promise; no more power over, or brokenness of heart under thy usual corruptions? What, come down the Mount, and break the Tables of Gods Law as soon as thou art off the place? As deep in thy passion, as uneven in thy course as before? There is a sure decay of that inward heat which should and would (if in his right temper) suck some nourishment from these.

Thirdly, By thy behaviour in thy worldly employments.

First, When thy worldly occasions do not leave thee in so free and spiritual a disposition, to return into the presence of God as formerly: May be thou couldst have come from thy Shop and Family-employments to thy Closet, and find that they have kept thee in frame, yea, may be, delivered thee up in a better frame for those duties; but now 'tis otherwise, thou canst not so shake them off, but they cleave to thy spirit, and give an earthly favour to thy praying and hearing; thou hast reason to bewail it: When nature decays, men go more stooping; and 'tis a sign some such decay is in thee, that thou canst not as thou usest, lift up thy heart from earthly to spiritual duties. They were intended as helps against temptation; and therefore when they prove snares to us, there is a distemper on us. If we wax worse after sleep, the body is not right, because the nature of sleep is to refresh; if exercise indisposeth for work, the reason is in our bodies. So here,

Secondly, When thy diligence in thy particular calling is more selfish: Possibly thou hast wrought in thy Shop, and set close at thy study, in obedience to the command chiefly; thy carnal interests have swayed but little with thee, but now thou trade'st more for thy self, and less for God. Oh have a care of this.

Thirdly, When thou canst not bear the disappointment of thy carnal ends in thy particular calling, as thou hast done: Thou workest and gettest little of the world, thou preachest and art not much esteemed, and thou knowest not well how to

brook these. The time was thou couldst retire thy self into God, and make up all thou didst want elsewhere in him; but now thou art not so well satisfied with thy estate, rank and condition; thy heart is fingering for more of these than God allows thee; this shews declining. Children are

harder to be pleas'd, and old men, (whose decay of nature makes them more froward, and in a manner children the second time) than others. Labour therefore to recover thy decaying Grace; and as this Lock grows, so thy strength with it will, to acquiesce in the dispose of Gods providence.

CHAP. IV.

A word of Counsel for the recovery of declining Grace.

WE come now to give a few directions to the Christian, how to recover decaying Grace.

Enquire faithfully into the cause of thy declining. The Christians armour decays two ways: Either by violent battery, when the Christian is overcome by temptation to sin; or else by neglecting to forbish and scour it with the use of those means which are as oyl to keep it clean and bright. Now enquire which of these have been the cause of thy decay: It is like both concur.

First, If thy Grace be weakened by any blow given it by any sin committed by thee; there then lies a threefold duty upon thee towards the recovery of it.

First, Thou art to renew thy repentance. It is Christs counsel, *Rev. 2. 5. to Ephesus, Repent, and do thy first works.* Where it is not only commanded as a duty, but prescribed as a means for her recovery: as if he had said, Repent, that thou maist do thy first works. So, *Hos. 14. 2.* the Lord sets back-sliding *Israel* about this work, bidding her, *take words, and turn to the Lord,* and *ver. 4.* he then tells her, he'll take her in hand to recover her of her sins, *I will heal their back-slidings:* a repenting soul is under promise of healing. And therefore (Christian) go and search thy heart, as thou wouldst do thy house, if some Thief or Murderer lay hid in it to cut thy throat in the night; and when thou hast found the sin that has done thee the mischief, then labour to fill thy heart with shame for it, and indignation against it, and so go big with sorrow, and cast it forth before the Lord in a heart-breaking confession; better thou do this, than Satan do thy errand to God for thee.

Secondly, When thou hast renewed thy repentance, forget not, delay not then to renew thy faith on the promise for pardon. Repentance, that is like purging Physick to evacuate the peccant humor; but if Faith come not presently with its Restorative, the poor creature will never get heart, or recover his strength. A soul may dye of a flux of sorrow as well as of sin; Faith hath an incarnating virtue, as they say of some strengthening meats, it feeds upon the Promise, & that is perfect, converting (or rather restoring) the soul, *Psalm 19. 7.* Though thou wert pined to skin and bones, all thy strength wasted, yet Faith would soon recruit thee, and enable every Grace to perform its Office cheerfully. Faith

sucks peace from the Promise, call'd *peace in believing*; from peace flows joy, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,* *Rom. 5. 1.* and *verse 2.* *We rejoyce in hope of Glory,* and joy affords strength, *The joy of the Lord is our strength.*

Thirdly, Back both these with a daily endeavour to mortifie those lusts which most prevail over thy Grace. Weeds cannot thrive, and the Flowers also; when Grace doth not act vigorously and freely, conclude it is oppress'd with some contrary lust, which weighs down its spirits, and makes them lumpish; even as superfluous humours do load the natural spirits in our bodies, that we have little joy to stir or go about any business till they be evacuated: and therefore ply this work close, it is not a days work or two in the year (like Physick at Spring and Fall) nothing more vain, than to make a bustle, as the Papiests do at their *Lem,* or as some unsound Professors among our selves, who seem to bestir themselves before a Sacrament or day of Fasting, with a great noise of Zeal, and then let those very lusts live peaceably in them all the year after. No, this is child-play to do and undo; thou must *mortifie daily thy lusts by the Spirit,* *Rom. 8. 13.* Follow but this work conscientiously in thy Christian course, making it thy endeavour (as constantly as the labouring man goes out every day to work in the Field where his Calling lies) to watch thy heart, and use all means for the discovery of sin, and as it breaks forth to be humbled for it, and be chopping at the root of it with the Ax of mortification; and thou shalt see by the blessing of God what a change for the better there will be in the constitution of thy Grace; thou who art now so poor, so pale, that thou art afraid to see thy own face long in the glass of thy own Conscience, thou shalt then reflect with joy upon thy own Conscience, and dare to converse with thy self without those surprizals of horror and fear, which before did appale thee; thy Grace, though it shall not be thy rejoycing, yet it will be thy evidence for Christ, in whom it is, and lead thee in with boldness, to lay claim to him, while the loose Christian, whose Grace is over-grown with lusts (for want of this weeding-hook) shall stand trembling at the door, questioning whether his Grace be true or no; and from that doubt of his welcome.

Secondly, If upon enquiry thou findest that thy

Armour

Armour decays, rather for want of scouring, than by any blow from sin presumptuously committed (as that is most common and ordinary, rust will soon spoil the best Armour, and negligence give grace its bane, as well as gross sins) then apply thy self to the use of those means which God hath appointed for the strengthening grace: If the fire goes out by taking off the wood, what may preserve it but by laying it on again?

First, I shall send thee to the Word of God, be more frequently conversant with it. *David* tells us where he renewed his spiritual life, and got his soul so oft into a heavenly heat, when grace in him began to chill; *The word* (he tells us) quickened him, this was the Sunny-bank he sat under. The Word draws forth the Christians grace, by presenting every one with an object suitable to act upon, this is of great power to rouse them up; as the coming in of a friend makes us (though sleepy before) shake off all drowiness, to enjoy his company. Affections they are actuated when their object is before them; if we love a person, this is excited by sight of him, or any thing that minds us of him; if we hate one, our blood riseth much more against him when before us. Now the Word brings the Christians graces and their object together. Here love may delight her self with the beholding Christ, who is set out to life there in all his love and loveliness; here the Christian may see his sins in a glass that will not flatter him; and can there any godly sorrow be in the heart, any hatred of sin, and not come forth, while the man is reading what they cost Christ for him?

Secondly, From the Word go to Meditation; this is as Belows to the Fire; that grace which lies choaked and eaten up for want of exercise, will by this be clearest and break forth; while thou art musing this fire will burn, and thy heart grow hot within thee, according to the nature of the subject thy thoughts dwell upon. Resolve therefore (Christian) to enclose some time from all worldly suitors, wherein thou maist every day (if possible) at least take a view of the most remarkable occurrences that have past between God and thee: First, ask thy soul what takings it hath had that day, what mercies Heaven hath sent into thee; and do not when thou hast asked the question (like *Pilate*) go out, but stay till thy soul has made report of Gods gracious dealings to thee: and (if thou beest wise to observe, and faithful to relate them) thy conscience must tell thee, that the Cock was never turn'd, the breast of mercy never put up all the day; yea, while thou art viewing these fresh mercies, telling over this new Coyne, hot out of the Mint of Gods bounty, ancient mercies they will come crowding in upon thee, and call for a place in thy thoughts, and tell thee what God hath done for thee months and years ago, (and indeed old debts should not be paid last) give them (Christian) all a hearing one time or another, and thou shalt see how they will work upon thy ingenuous spirit. It is with the Christian in this case, as with some Merchant's servant that keeps his Masters Cash; he tells his Master he hath a great sum of his by him, and desires he would discharge him of it, and see how

his accounts stand; but he can never find him a leisure. There is a great treasure of mercy always in the Christians hands, and conscience is oft calling the Christian to take the account, and see what God has done for him, but seldom it is he can find time to tell his mercies over; and is it any wonder that such should go behind-hand in their spiritual estate, who take no more notice what the gracious dealings of God are with them? how can he be thankful that seldom thinks what he receives? or patient when God afflicts, that wants one of the most powerful arguments to pacifie a mutinous spirit in trouble, and that is taken from the abundant good we receive at the hands of the Lord as well as a little evil? how can such a souls love flame to God, that is kept at such a distance from the mercies of God, which are fuel to it? and the like might be said of all the other graces. Secondly, reflect upon thy self, and bestow a few serious thoughts upon thine own behaviour, what it hath been towards God and man all along the day. Ask thy soul, as *Elisha* his servant, Whence comest thou, O my soul? where hast thou been? what hast thou done for God this day, and how? and when thou goest about this, look that thou neither beest taken off from a thorow search (as *Jacob* was by *Rachel's* specious excuse) nor to be found to cocker thy self, (as *Eli* his Sons) when thou shalt upon enquiry take thy heart tardy in any point of thy duty; take heed what thou doest, for thou judgest for God, who receives the wrong by thy sin, and therefore will do himself justice if thou wilt not.

Thirdly, From meditation go to prayer; indeed a soul in meditation is on his way to prayer; that duty leads the Christian to this, and this brings help to that; when the Christian has done his utmost by meditation to excite his graces, and chase his spirit into some divine heat, he knows all this is but to lay the wood in order. The fire must come from above to kindle, and this must be fetched by prayer. They say Stars have greatest influences when they are in conjunction with the Sun; then sure the graces of a Saint should never work more powerfully than in prayer, for then he is in the nearest conjunction and communion with God. That Ordinance which hath such power with God, must needs have a mighty influence on our selves. It will not let God rest, but raiseth him up to his peoples succour, and is it any wonder if it be a means to rouse up and excite the Christians grace? How oft do we see a dark cloud upon *David's* spirit at the beginning of his prayer, which by that time he is a little warm in his work, begins to clear up, and before he ends, breaks forth into high actings of faith and acclamations of praise? Only here (Christian) take heed of formal praying, this is as baneful to grace as not praying. A plaister, though proper, and of sovereign virtue, yet if it be laid on cold, may do more hurt than good.

Fourthly, To all the former, join fellowship and communion with the Saints thou livest amongst. No wonder to hear a house is robbed that stands far from Neighbours; he that walks in communion of Saints; he travels in company, he

dwells in a City where one house keeps up another, to which Jerusalem is compared. 'Tis observable concerning the house in whose ruins Job's Children were entombed, that a wind came from the wilderness and smote the four corners of it, it seems it stood alone; the Devil knows what he does in hindering this great Ordinance of Communion of Saints, in doing this, he hinders the progress of Grace, yea, brings that which Christians have, into a declining wasting state. The Apostle couples those two duties close together, *to hold fast our profession, and consider one another, and provoke into love and to good works*, Heb. 10. 23, 24. Indeed it is a dange-

rous step to Apostasie to forsake the communion of Saints; hence 'tis said of Demas, *He hath left us, and embraced the present world*. O what mischief has Satan done us in these few late years, in this one particular! what is become of this communion of Saints? where are there two or three to be found that can agree to walk together? those that could formerly suffer together, cannot sit together at their Fathers Table, can hardly pray one with, or one for another; the breath of one Christian is strange to another that once lay in his bosom. *This is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation.*

CHAP. V.

The words opened, and what is meant by the Evil Day.

That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done, &c.

WE come to the Argument with which the Apostle urgeth the Exhortation, and that is double.

The first hath respect to the hour of battel, *That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.*

The second to the happy issue of the war, which will crown the Christian thus arm'd, and that is certain victory, *and having done all to stand.*

First, Of the first, *That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.* But what is this evil day? Some take this evil day to comprehend the whole life of a Christian here below in this vale of tears; and then the Argument runs thus: Take to your selves the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to persevere to the end of your life, which you will find, as it were, one continued day of trouble and trial. Thus Jacob draws a black line over his whole life, *Few and evil have the days of my life been*, Gen. 47. What day shines so fair, that overcasts not before night, nay in which the Christian meets not with some shower or other, enough to deserve the name of an evil day? Every day hath its portion, yea, proportion; *Sufficient is the evil of the day.* We need not borrow and take up sorrows upon us of the morrow, to make up our present load; as we read of daily bread, so of a daily Cross, *Luke 9. 24.* which we are bid to take, not to make (we need not make crosses for our selves, as we are prone to do) God in his Providence will provide one for us; and we are bid to take it up, but we hear nothing of laying it down, till Cross and we lie down together; our troubles and our lives are coetaneous, live and die together; here when joy comes, sorrow is at its heel; staff and rod go together; Job himself (whose prosperity the Devil so grudg'd, and set forth in all his bravery and pomp, *Job 1. 10.* as if his Sun had no shadow) hear what account this good man gives of this his most flourishing time, *chap. 3. 26. I was not in safety, neither had I*

rest, neither was I quiet. There were some troubles that broke his rest, when his bed was (to thinking) as soft as heart could wish, even now this good man toiles and tumbles from one side to the other, and is not quiet. If one should have come to Job, and blessed him with his happy condition, and said, Surely, Job, thou couldest be content with what thou hast for thy portion, if thou mightest have all this settled on thee, and thy heirs after thee; he would have said, as once *Luther*, That God should not put him off with these. Such is the Saints state in this bottom, that their very life here, and all the pompous entertainments of it, they are their Cross, because they detain them from their Crown. We need nothing to make our life an evil day, more than our absence from our chief good; which cannot be recompenced by the world, nor enjoyed with it. Only this goodness there is in this evil, that it is short; our life is but an evil day, it will not last long; and sure it was mercy that God hath abridged so much of the term of mans life in these last days wherein so much of Christ and Heaven are discovered, that it would have put the Saints patience hard to it, to have known so much of the upper worlds Glory, and then be kept so long from it, as the Fathers in the first age were. O comfort one another (Christians) with this; though your life be evil with troubles, yet 'tis short; a few steps, and you are out of the rain. There is a great difference between a Saint in regard of the evils he meets with, and the wicked; as two Travellers riding contrary ways, (both taken in the Rain and wet) but one rides from the rain, and so is soon out of the shower; but the other runs into the rainy corner, the further he goes, the more he is. The Saint he meets with troubles as the wicked, but he is soon out of the shower, death comes, he has fair weather; but the wicked the further he goes, the worse; what he meets with here,

here, is but a few drops, the great storm is the last. The pouring out of Gods wrath shall be in Hell, where all the deeps of horror are opened, both from above of Gods righteous fury, and from beneath of their own accusing and tormenting consciences.

Secondly, others take the phrase in a more restrained sense, to denote those particular seasons of our life, wherein more especially we meet with afflictions and sufferings. *Beza* reads it *tempore adversitatis*, in time of our adversity. Though our whole life be evil, if compared with Heavens blissful state, our clearest day, night to that glorious morning; yet one part of our life compared with another, may be called good, and the other evil, we have our vicissitudes here. The Providences of God to his Saints here, while on this low bottom of earth, are mixt and part-coloured, as was signified by the *speckled horses* in *Zechariah's* Vision, *Zechariah* 1. 8. Red and White, Peace and War, Joy and Sorrow chequer our days. Earth is a middle place betwixt Heaven and Hell, and so is our state here, it partakes of both; we go up hill and down hill till we get to our journey's end, yea, we find the deepest slough nearest to our Fathers house. Death, I mean, into which all the other troubles of our life fall, as streams into some great River, and with which they all end, and are swallowed up. This

being the comprehensive evil, conceive to be meant here, being made remarkable by a double article, *in diebus tribulationis*, that day, that evil day, not excluding those other days of tribulation which intervene. These are but so many petty deaths, every one snatching away a piece of our lives with them, or like Pages sent before, to usher in this King of terrors that comes behind.

The Phrase being opened, let us consider the strength of this first Argument, with which the Apostle re-inforceth his Exhortation, of taking to our selves the whole Armour of God, and that consists in three weighty circumstances.

First, The nature and quality of this day of affliction, It is an evil day.

Secondly, The unavoidableness of this evil day of affliction, implied in the form of speech, *that you may withstand in the evil day*. He shuts out all hope of escaping, as if he had said, you have no way but to withstand, please not your selves with thoughts of shunning battel; the evil day must come, be you arm'd or not arm'd.

Thirdly, The necessity of this Armour, *to withstand*. As we cannot run from it, so not bear up before it, and oppose the force which will be made against us, except clad with Armour. These would afford several points, but for brevity we shall lay them together in one Conclusion.

CHAP. VI.

Sheweth that the day of affliction is evil, and in what respects, as also unavoidable; and why to be prepared for.

Doct. It behoves every one to arm and prepare himself for the evil day of affliction and death, which unavoidably he must conflict with. The point hath three branches.

First, The day of affliction and death is an evil day.

Secondly, This evil day is unavoidable.

Thirdly, it behoves every one to provide for this evil day.

First, Of the first branch; The day of affliction, especially death, is an evil day. Here we must shew how affliction is evil, and how not.

First, It is not morally or intrinsically evil. If it were evil in this sense, First, God could not be the Author of it: his nature is so pure, that no such evil can come from him, any more than the Sun's light can make night. But this evil of affliction he voucheth for his own act: *Against the Family do I devise an evil*, Mic. 3. 2. Yea, more, he appropriates it so to himself, as that he will not have us think any can do us evil beside himself. 'Tis the prerogative he glories in, that there is no evil in the City, but it is of his doing, *Amos* 3. 6. And well it is for the Saints, that their crosses are all made in Heaven; they would not else be so fired to their backs as they are. But for the evil of sin,

he disowns it with a strict charge, that we lay not this brat, which is begotten by Satan upon our impure hearts, at his door: *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man*, Jam. 1. 13.

Secondly, If affliction were intrinsically evil, it could in no respect be the object of our desire, which sometimes it is and may be. We are to chuse affliction rather than sin, yea, the greatest affliction before the least sin. *Moses* chose affliction with the people of God, rather than the pleasures of sin for a season. We are bid rejoyce when we fall into divers temptations, that is, afflictions.

But in what respects then may the day of affliction be called evil?

First, as it is grievous to sense, in Scripture, evil is oft put as contradietory to joy and comfort: *We look for peace, and behold no good*. A merry heart is called a good heart; a sad spirit, an evil spirit; because Nature hath an abhorrency to all that opposeth its joy, and this every affliction doth more or less. No affliction, while present, is joyous, but grievous, *Heb.* 10. 33. it hath, like Physick, an unpleasant farewell to the sense. Therefore *Solomon* speaking of the evil days of sickness, ex-
presseth

preffeth them to be distastful to nature, that we shall say, *We have no pleasure in them.* They take away the joy of our life. Natural joy is a true flower of the Sun of prosperity, it opens and shuts with it. 'Tis true indeed, the Saints never have more joy than in their affliction, but this comes in upon another score: they have a good God that sends it in, or else they would be as sadly on it as others. 'Tis no more natural for comfort to spring from afflictions, than for Grapes to grow on Thorns, or Manna in the Wilderness. The Israelites might have looked long enough for such bread, if Heaven had not miraculously rained it down. God chuseth this season, to make the omnipotency of his love the more conspicuous. As *Elijah*, to add to the miracle, first causeth water in abundance to be poured on the wood and Sacrifice, so much as to fill the trench, and then brings fire from Heaven by his prayer to lick it up: Thus God pours out the flood of affliction upon his children, and then kindles that inward joy in their bosoms which licks up all their sorrow, yea, he makes the very waters of affliction they float on, add a further sweetness to the musick of their spiritual joy; but still it is God that is good, and affliction that is evil.

Secondly, The day of affliction is an evil day, as it is an unwelcome remembrancer of what sinful evils have passed in our lives. It revives the memory of old sins, which it may be were buried many years ago in the grave of forgetfulness. The night of affliction is the time when such Ghosts use to walk in mens consciences: And as the darkness of the night adds to the horror of any fearful object, so doth the state of affliction (which is it self uncomfortable) add to the terrour of our sins then remembred. Never did the Patriarchs sin look so ghastly on them, as when it recoil'd upon them in their distress, *Gen. 42. 21.* The sinner then hath more real apprehensions of wrath than at another time: Affliction approximates judgement: yea, it is interpreted by him, as a Pursivant sent to call him presently before God, and therefore must beget a woful confusion and consternation in his spirit. Oh that men would think of this, how they could bear the sight of their sins, and a Rehearsal-Sermon of all their ways in that day! That is the blessed man indeed, who can with the Prophet then look on them, and triumph over them. This indeed is a dark parable, as he calls it, few can skill of it; as *Psal. 49. 4, 5.* *I will open my dark saying upon the harp; wherefore should I fear in the day of evil, when the iniquity of my heels compasseth me about.*

Thirdly, The day of affliction makes discovery of much evil to be in the heart, which was not seen before. Affliction shakes and roils the Creature; if any sediment be at the bottom, it will appear then. Sometimes it discovers the heart to be quite naught, that before had some seeming good; these suds wash off the hypocrites paint. *Natura vexata prodit seipsam;* When corrupt Nature is vex'd, it shews it self; and some afflictions do that purpose. We read of such as are offended when persecution comes; they fall quite o it with their

Profession, because it puts them to such cost and trouble; others in their distress that curse their God, *Isa. 8. 21.* It is impossible for a naughty heart to think well of an afflicting God. The hireling, if his Master takes up a staff to beat him, throws down his work and runs away; and so doth a false heart serve God. Yea, even where the person is gracious, corruption is oft found to be stronger, and graces weaker than they were thought to be. *Peter*, who sets out so valiantly at first to walk on the Sea, the wind doth but rise, and he begins to sink: Now he sees there was more unbelief in his heart than he before suspected. Sharp afflictions are to the soul, as a driving rain to the house: We know not that there are such crannies and holes in the house, till we see it drop down here and there. Thus we perceive not how unmortified this corruption, not how weak that grace is, till we are thus searched, and made more fully to know what is in our hearts by such tryals. This is the reason why none have such humble thoughts of themselves, and such pitiful and forbearing thoughts towards others in their infirmities, as those who are most acquainted with afflictions, they meet with so many foils in their conflicts, as make them carry a low sail in respect of their own grace, and a tender respect to their brethren, more ready to pity than censure them in their weaknesses.

Fourthly, This is the season when the evil one Satan comes to tempt. What we find call'd the time of tribulation, *Mat. 13. 22.* we find in the same parable, *Luke 8. 13.* called the time of temptation. Indeed they both meet; seldom doth God afflict us, but Satan addeth temptation to our wilderness; *This is your hour* (saith Christ) *and the power of darkness,* *Luke 22. 53.* Christs sufferings from man, and temptation from the Devil came together. *Esau*, who hated his Brother for the blessing, said in his heart, *The days of mourning for my Father are at hand, then will I kill my Brother,* *Gen. 27. 41.* Times of affliction are the days of mourning; those Satan waits for to do us a mischief in.

Fifthly and lastly, The day of affliction hath oft an evil event and issue, and in this respect proves an evil day indeed. All is well (we say) that ends well; the product of afflictions on the Christian is good; the rod with which they are corrected, yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and therefore they can call their afflictions good, that is a good instrument that lets out only the bad blood. *It is good for me that I was afflicted,* saith David. I have read of a holy woman, who used to compare her afflictions to her children; they both put her to great pain in the bearing; but as she knew not which of her children to have been without, (for all the trouble in the bringing forth) so neither which of her afflictions she could have missed, notwithstanding the sorrow they put her to in the enduring. But to the wicked the issue is sad; first in regard of sin, they leave them worse, more impenitent, hardened in sin, and outrageous in their wicked practices. Every Plague on Egypt added to the Plague of hardness on *Pharaoh's* heart: He that for some while could beg prayers of *Moses* for him-
self,

self, at last comes to that pass, that he threatens to kill him if he come to him any more. Oh what a prodigious height do we see many come to in sin, after some great Sickness or other Judgement? Children do not more shoot up in their bodily stature after an Ague, than they in their lusts after afflictions. Oh how greedy and ravenous are they after their prey, when they once get off their clog and chain from their heels! When Physick works not kindly, it doth not only leave the Disease uncured, but the Poyson of the Physick stays in the body also. Many appear thus poysoned by their afflictions, by the breaking out of their lust afterward. Secondly, In regard of sorrow; every affliction on a wicked person produceth another, and that a greater than it self: The greatest wedge comes at last, which shall rive him fit for the fire. The Sinner is whipt from affliction to affliction, as the Vagrant from Constable to Constable, till at last he comes to Hell, his proper place and settled abode, where all sorrows will meet in one that is endless.

The second branch of the point follows. This evil day is unavoidable: we may as well stop the Chariot of the Sun, when posting to night, and chase away the shades of the evening, as escape this hour of darkness that is coming upon us all. *None hath power over the Spirit to retain it, neither hath he power in the body of death, and there is no discharge in that war, Eccles. 8. 8.* Among men 'tis possible to get off when prest for the Wars, by pleading privilege of years, estate, weakness of body, protection from the Prince, and the like; Or if all these fail, possibly the sending another in our room, or a bribe given in the hand, may serve the turn. But in this war the press is so strict, that there is no dispensation. *David* could willingly have gone for his Son; we hear him crying, *Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my Son, my Son!* But he will not be taken, that young Gallant must go himself. We must in our own person come into the Field, and look death in the face. Some indeed we find so fond, as to promise themselves immunity from this day, as if they had an Ensuring-office in their breast: They say, they have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell they are at an agreement; when the over-flowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto them. And now (like debtors they have feed the Serjeant) they walk abroad boldly and fear no arrest. But God tells them, as fast as they bind, he will loose: *Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand.* And how should it, if God will not set his seal to it? There is a Divine Law for this evil day, which came in force upon *Adam's* first sin; that laid the fatal knife to the throat of mankind, which hath opened a sluice to let out his heart-blood ever since. God to prevent all escape, hath sown the seeds of death in our very constitution and nature, so that we can as soon run from our selves, as run from Death. We need no feller to come with a hand of violence, and hew us down; there is in the tree a worm, which grows out of its own substance, that will destroy it; so in us, those infirmities of nature that will bring us down to the dust. Our death was bred,

when our life was first conceived; and as a breeding woman cannot hinder the hour of her travel; (that follows in nature upon the other) so neither can man hinder the bringing forth of death, with which his life is big. All the pains and aches man feels in his life, are but so many *singulus morientis natura*, groans of dying nature; they tell him his dissolution is at hand. Beest thou a Prince sitting in all thy state and pomp, Death dare enter thy Palace, and come through all thy Guards, to deliver the fatal message it hath from God to thee, yea, runs its Dagger to thy heart. Wert thou compassed with a Colledge of Doctors consulting thy health, Art and Nature both must deliver thee up when that comes. Even when thy strength is firmest, and thou eatest thy bread with a merry heart, that very food which nourisheth thy life, gives thee withal an earnest of death, as it leaves those dregs in thee which will in time procure the same. Oh how unavoidable must this evil day of death be, when that very staff knocks us down to the Grave at last, which our life leans on, and is preserved by! God owes a debt both to the first *Adam*, and second: To the first he owes the wages of his sin; to the second, the reward of his sufferings. The place for full payment of both, is the other world; so that except Death comes to convey man thither, the wicked who are the posterity of the first *Adam*, will miss of that full pay for their sins, which the threatening makes due debt, and engageth God to perform: The godly also who are the seed of Christ, these should not receive the whole purchase of his blood, which he would never have shed but upon credit of that promise of eternal life, which God gave him for them before the world began: This is the reason why God hath made this day so sure; in it he discharge both bonds.

The third branch of the point follows, That it behoves every one to prepare, and effectually to provide for this evil day; which so unavoidably impends us: And that upon a twofold account; First, In point of duty; Secondly, In point of wisdom.

First, In point of duty. First, It is upon our allegiance to the great God, that we provide and arm our selves against this day. Suppose a Subject were trusted with one of his Princes Castles, and this man should hear that a puissant Enemy was coming to lay siege to this Castle, yet takes no care to lay in arms and provision for his defence, and so 'tis lost; how could such a one be cleared of Treason? Doth he not basely betray the place, and with it his Princes honour into his Enemies hand? Our souls are this Castle, which we are every one to keep for God: We have certain intelligence that Satan hath a design upon them, and the time when he intends to come with all his powers of darkness, to be that evil day. Now as we should be found true to our trust, we are obliged to stand upon our defence, and store our selves with what may enable us to make a vigorous resistance.

Secondly, We are obliged to provide for that day, as a suitable return for, and improvement of the opportunities and means which God affords us for

for this very end. We cannot without shameful ingratitude to God, make waste of those helps God gives us in order to this great work. Every one would cry out upon him that should basely spend that money upon riot in prison, which was lent him to procure his deliverance out of prison: And do we not blush to bestow those Talents upon our Lusts and Satan, which God graciously indulgeth to deliver us from them, and his rage in a dying hour? What have we Bibles for, Ministers and Preaching for, if we mean not to furnish our selves by them with Armour for the evil day? In a word, what is the intent of God in lengthening out our days, and continuing us some while here in the Land of the Living? Was it that we might have time to revel or rather ravel out upon the pleasure of this vain world? Doth he give us our precious time to be employed in catching such Butterflies as these earthly honours and riches are? It cannot be. Masters do not use (if wise) to set their servants about such work as will not pay for the candle they burn in doing it. And truly nothing less than the glorifying of God, and saving our souls at last, can be worth the precious time we spend here. The great God hath a greater end than most men think in this dispensation: If we would judge aright, we should take his own interpretation of his actions; and the Apostle Peter bids us, *count that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation*, 2 Pet. 3. 15. which place he quotes out of Paul, (as the sense, though not in the same form of words) which in Rom. 2. 4. are these; *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* From both places we are taught what is the mind of God, and the language he speaks to us in by every moments patience, and inch of time that is granted to us. It is a space given for repentance. God sees (as we are) death and judgement could bring no good news to us, we are in no case to welcom the evil day; and therefore mercy stands up to plead for the poor creature in Gods bosom, and begs a little time more may be added to his life, that by this indulgence it may be provoked to repent before he be called to the Bar. Thus we come by every day that is continually super-added to our time on earth. And doth not this lay a strong obligation on us to lay out every point of this time, unto the same end 'tis begg'd for?

Secondly, In point of wisdom. The wisdom of a man appears most eminently in two things.

First, In the matter of his choice and chief care.

Secondly, In a due time of this his choice and care.

First, A wise man makes choice of that for the subject of his chief care and endeavour, which is of greatest importance and consequence to him: Fools and Children only are intent about toys and trifles; they are as busie and earnest in making of a house of Dirt or Cards, as Solomon was in making of his Temple. Those poor Bables are as adequate to their foolish apprehensions, as great enterprises are to wise men. Now such is the importance of the evil day, especially that of Death, that it proves

a man a fool, or wise, as he comports himself to it. The end specifies every action, and gives it the name of good or evil, of wise or foolish. The evil day of death is, as the end of our days, so to be the end of all the actions of our life. Such will our life be found at last, as it hath been in order to this one day. If the several Items of our life (counsels and projects that we have pursued) when they shall then be cast up, will amount to a blessed death, then we shall appear to be wise men indeed: But if after all our goodly plots and policies for other things, we be unprovided for that hour, we must be content to dye fools at last; and no such fool as the dying fool. The Christian goes for the fool (in the worlds account) while he lives; but when death comes, the wise world will then confess they miscalled him, and shall take it to themselves; *We fools counted his life to be madness, and his end to be without honour: But now is he now numbered among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints!* therefore have we erred from the way of truth, Wisd. 5. 4, 5. The place is Apocryphal, but sinners will find the matter of it Canonical. 'Tis true indeed, Saints are out-witted by the world in the things of the world, and no marvel; neither doth it impeach their wisdom any more, than it doth a Scholars, to be excelled by the Cobler in his mean trade. Nature, where it intends higher excellencies, is more careless in those things that are inferiour; as we see in man, who (being made to excel the Beasts in a rational soul) is himself excelled by some Beast or other in all his senses. Thus the Christian may well be surpassed in matters of worldly commerce, because he hath a nobler object in his eye, that makes him converse with the things of the world in a kind of non-attendance; he is not much careful in these matters, if he can dye well at last, and be justified for a wise man at the day of the Resurrection, all is well; he thinks it not manners to be unwilling to stay so long for the clearing of his wisdom, as God can wait for the vindication of his own glorious Nature, which will not appear in its glory till that day, when he will convince the ungodly of their hard thoughts and speeches of him, Jude 2, 15. Then they shall, till then they will not be convinced.

Secondly, A wise man labours duly to time his care and endeavour for the attaining of what he proposeth. 'Tis the fool that comes when the Market is done: As the evil day is of great concernment in respect of its event, so the placing of our care for it in the right season is of chief importance, and that sure must be before it comes. There are more doors than one, at which the Messenger may enter that brings evil tidings to us, and at which he will knock we know not; we know not where we shall be arrested, whether at Bed or Board, whether at home or in the field, whether among our friends that will counsel and comfort us, or among our enemies that will add weight to our sorrow by their cruelty. We know not when, whether by day or night (many of us) not whether in the morning, noon, or evening of our age. As he calls to work at all times of the day, so he doth to bed; may be while thou art praying or preaching, and

and it would be sad to go away profaning them and the Name of God in them; possibly when thou art about worse work, death may like thy quaffing cup out of thy hand; while thou art sitting in the Ale-house with thy jovial Mates, or meet thee as thou art reeling home, and make some ditch thy grave, that as thou livedst like a Beast, so thou shouldst dye like a Beast. In a word, we know not the kind of evil God will use as the instrument to stab us; whether some bloody hand of violence shall do it, or a disease out of our bowels and bodies; whether some acute disease, or some lingering sickness; whether such a sickness as shall slay the man while the body is alive, (I mean, take the head and deprive us of our reason) or not; whether such noisom troubles as shall make our friends afraid to let us breathe on them, or themselves look on us; whether they shall be afflictions aggravated with Satans temptations, and the terrors of our own affrighted Consciences, or not. Who knows where, when, or what the evil day shall be? Therefore doth God conceal these, that we should provide for all.

Cesar would never let his Souldiers know, when or whither he meant to march. The knowing of these would torment us with distracting fear; the not knowing them, should awaken us to a providing care. It is an ill time to calk the ship, when at sea, tumbling up and down in a storm: This should have been look'd to, when on her seat in the harbour. And as bad it is to begin to trim a soul for Heaven, when tossing on a sick bed. Things that are done in a hurry, are seldom done well: A man called out of his bed at midnight with a dismal fire on his house-top, cannot stand to dress himself in order as at another time; but runs down with one Stocking half on, may be, and the other not on at all. Those poor creatures, I am afraid, go in as ill a dress into another world, who begin to provide for it, when on a dying bed Conscience calls them up with a cry of hell-fire in their bosoms: But (alas!) they must go, though they have not time to put their Armour on; and so they are put to repent at leisure in hell, of their shuffling up a repentance in haste here. We come to the Application of the Point.

CHAP. VII.

The Application of the Point.

Use 1. First, It reproves those that are so far from providing for the Evil day, that they will not suffer any thoughts of that day to stay with them; they are as unwilling to be led into a discourse of this Subject, as a child is to be carried into the dark, and there left: It is a death to them to think of death, or that which leads to it. As some foolishly think, they must needs dye presently when they have made their Will, so these think they hasten that sorrowful day by musing on it. The meditation of it is no more welcome to them, than the company of *Moses* was to *Pharaoh*: Therefore they say to it, as he to *Moses*, *Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more.* The fear of it makes them to butcher and make away all those thoughts which Conscience stirs up concerning it: And at last they get such a mastery of their Consciences, that they arrive to a kind of Atheism; it is as rare to have them think or speak of such matters, as to see a Fly busie in Winter: Nothing now but what is frolick and jocund, is entertained by them: If any such thoughts come as prophesie Mirth, and carnal content, these (as right with their hearts) are taken up into the Chariot to sit with them, but all other are commanded to go behind. Alas, poor spirited wretches! something might be said for you, if this evil day of Death and Judgement were such *entia rationis* as had no foundation or being but what our Fancies give them; (Such troubles there are in the world, which have all their evil from our thoughts; when we are disquieted with the scorns and reproaches of men, did we but not

think of them, they were nothing;) But thy banishing the thoughts of this evil day from thy mind, will be a poor short relief. Thou canst neither hinder its coming, nor take away its sting when it comes, by the flighting it. Thou art like a passenger in a ship, sleep or wake, thou art going thy voyage. Thou dost but like that silly Bird, who puts her head into a Reed, and then thinks she is safe from the Fowler because she sees him not. Thou art a fair mark for Gods vengeance; he sees thee, and is taking his aim at thee, when thou seest not him; yea, thou putttest thy self under an inevitable necessity of perishing, by not thinking of this day. The first step to our safety, is consideration of our danger.

Use 2. It reproves those, who if they think of the evil day, yet it is so far off, that it is to little purpose. They will be sure to set it at such a distance from them, as shall take away the force of the meditation, that it shall not strike them down in the deep sense and fear of it. That Cannon, which if we stood at the mouth of it, would shatter us limb from limb, will not so much as scare them that get out of its reach. The further we put the evil day, the weaker impression it makes in us. 'Tis true (say sinners) it cannot be helped, we owe a debt to nature, it must be paid; sickness will come, and death follow on that, and judgement brings up the rear of both. But (alas!) they look not for these guests yet, they prophesie of these things a great while hence to come; many a fair day they hope will intervene. Thus men are ve-

ry kind to themselves: First they wish it may be long before it comes; and then because they would have it so, they are bold to promise themselves it shall be so; and when once they have made this promise, no wonder if they then live after the rate of their vain hopes, putting off the stating of their accounts, till the winter-evening of old age, when they shall not have such allurements to gad abroad from the pleasures of this life. O then they will do great matters to fit them for the evil day. Bold man! who gave thee leave to cut out such large thongs of that time which is not thine, but Gods? Who makes the Lease, the Tenant or the Landlord? Or dost thou forget thou farmest thy life, and art not an owner? This is the device of Satan, to make you delay; whereas a present expectation of the evil day, would not let you sit still unprepared. Oh why do you let your souls from their work, make them idle and rest from their burdens, by telling them of long life, while death chops in upon you unawares? Oh what shame will your whorish hearts be put to, that now say your Husband is gone afar off, you may fill your selves with loves; if he should come before he is looked for, and find you in bed with your lusts? and let me tell you, sudden destruction is threatened, especially to such secure ones. Read *Matth. 24. 48, 50, 51.* where 'tis denounced against that sort of Sinners, who please themselves with their Lords delaying his coming, That the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Indeed God must go out of his ordinary road of dealing with Sinners, if such scape a sudden ruine. One is bold to challenge any to shew a president in Scripture of any that are branded for security, that some remarkable, yea, sudden judgement did not surprize. *Sodom*, how soon after a Sun-shine morning did the Heavens thicken, and bury them in a few hours (by a storm of fire) in their own ashes? Careless *Laish* cut off before they almost think of it. *Agag*, when he saw the clouds of his fears break, and fair weather was in his countenance, they return immediately upon him, and shut him up in death; he is presently hewen in pieces. *Amalek* slaughtered by *David* before the triumph of their late victory was cold. *Nebuchadnezzar* strutting himself in his Palace with this bravado in his mouth, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built?* And before he can get the words out of his throat, there is another voice falling from Heaven, saying, *O King, to thee be it spoken, thy Kingdom is departed from thee, Dan. 4. 31, 33.* And the same hour it was fulfilled, and he sent to graze with the beasts. *Dives* blessing himself for many years, and within a few hours the pillow is pluckt from under his head, and you hear no more of him, till out of Hell he roar. Yea, a whole world (few persons excepted) drowned, and they not know till the day the flood came, *Matth. 24. 29.* and swept them all away. And who art thou, O man, that promisest thy self an exemption, when Kings, Cities, a whole World have been ruined after this sort?

Use 3. This reproves those, who indeed think oft of this evil day, (much against their will) by

reason of an awakened Conscience, that is ever pinching of them, and preaching on *Paul's* text (before *Felix*) to them, till it makes them tremble as he did; yet such is the power of lust in their hearts, that it makes them spur on, notwithstanding all the rebukes conscience gives them, and affrighting thoughts they have of the evil day; yet they continue in their old trade of sin desperately. The secure sinner (that has broke prison from his conscience) is like a strong-brain'd drunkard, he swallows down his sin (as the other does his drink) with pleasure, and is not stirred at all: But here is a man that is stomach-sick (as I may so say) his conscience is oft disgorging his sweet draughts, and yet he will sin, though with pain and anguish. Oh consider (poor wretches) what you do; instead of arming your selves against the evil day, you arm the evil day against your selves; you are sticking the bed with pins and needles, on which you must ere long be laid; you are throwing billets into that fiery Furnace, wherein at last you shall be cast: And all this in spite of your consciences, which yet God mercifully sets in your way, that the prickings of them may be as a hedge of thorns, to keep thee from the pursuit of thy lusts. Know therefore, if thou wilt go on, that as thy conscience takes from the pleasures of thy Sin at present, so it will add to the horror of thy torment hereafter.

Use 4. It reproves those, who though they are not so violent and outrageous in sin, to make them stink above ground in the nostrils of others, yet rest in an unarm'd condition; they do not fly to Christ for covering and shelter against this day of storm and tempest; and the reason is, they have a lye in their right hand, they feed on ashes, and a deceived heart carries them aside from seeking after Christ. It would make one tremble to see how confident many are with their false hopes and self-confidences, daring to come up (as *Corah* with his Censer, as undauntedly as *Moses* himself) even to the mouth of the Grave, till on a sudden they are swallowed up with destruction, and sent to be undeceived in Hell, who would not be beaten from their refuges of lies here. Whoever thou art, O man, and whatever thou hast to glory in, were it the most Saint-like conversation that ever any lived on earth, yet if this be thy shelter against the evil day, thou wilt perish. No salvation when that flood comes, but Christ; yea, being in Christ, hanging on the out-side of the Ark by a specious Profession, will not save. Methinks I see how those of the old world ran for their lives, some to this Hill, and others to that high Tree, and how the Waves pursued them, till at last they were swept into the devouring flood. Such will your end be, that turn any other way for help than to Christ; yet the Ark waits on you, yea, comes up close to your gate to take you in. *Noah* did not put forth his hand more willingly to take in the Dove, than Christ doth to receive those who fly to him for refuge. Oh reject not your own mercies for lying vanity.

Let this put thee upon the enquiry (whoever thou art) whether thou beest in a posture of defence for this

this evil day. Ask thy soul soberly and solemnly, Art thou provided for this day, this evil day? How couldest thou part with what that will take away, and welcome what it will certainly bring? Death comes with a Volder to carry away all thy carnal enjoyments, and to bring thee up a reckoning for them. Oh canst thou take thy leave of the one, and with peace and confidence read the other? Will it not affright thee to have thy health and strength turned into faintness and feebleness; thy sweet nights of rest, into waking eyes, and restless tossings up and down; thy voice that has so often chanted to the viol, to be now acquainted to no other tune but sighs and groans? Oh how canst thou look upon thy sweet and dear relations, with thoughts of removing from them? yea, behold the instrument, as it were, whetting, that shall give the fatal stroke to sever soul and body? Think that thou wert now half dead in thy members, that are most remote from the fountain of life, and death to have but a few moments journey, before it arrive to thy heart, and so beat thy last breath out of thy body. Possibly the inevitable necessity of these do make thee to harden thy self against them; this might indeed in some Heathen, that is not resolv'd whether there be another world or no, help a little to blunt the edge of that terror, which otherwise would cut deeper into his amazed heart. But if thou believest another world, and that Judgment which stands at Deaths back, ready to allot thee thy unchangeable state in blis or misery; surely thou canst not relieve thy awakened conscience with such a poor cordial. Oh therefore think what answer thou meanest to give unto the great God, at thy appearing before him, when he shall ask thee, What thou canst say, why the sentence of eternal damnation should not then be pronounced against thee. Truly, we deal unfaithfully with our own souls, if we bring not our thoughts to this issue. If now you should ask, How you should provide against the evil day, so that you may stand before that dreadful Bar, and live so in the mean time, that you might not be under a slavish bondage, through the fearful expectation of it; Take it in a few directions.

First, If ever you would have a blessed issue of this evil day, so as to stand in judgment before the great God, rest not till thou hast got into a Covenant-relation with Christ. Dying *David's* living comfort was drawn from the Covenant God had made with him, this was all his desire, and all his salvation. How canst thou put thy head into the other world without horror, if thou hast not solid ground that Christ will own thee for his? Heaven hath its proper Heirs, and so hath Hell. The Heirs of Heaven are such as are in Covenant with God: The foundation of it was laid in a Covenant, and all the mansions there are prepared for a people in Covenant with him; *Gather my Saints together that have made a Covenant with me.* But how mayest thou get into this Covenant-relation? First, break thy Covenant with sin: Thou art by nature a Covenant-servant to sin and Satan; may be thou hast not expressly in words and formally, as Witches, sealed this Covenant; yet virtually, as thou hast

done the work of Satan, and been at the command of thy lusts, accepting the reward of unrighteousness, (the pleasure and carnal advantages they have paid thee in for the same) therein thou hast declared thy self to be so. Now if ever thou wilt be taken into Covenant with God, break this: A Covenant with Hell and Heaven cannot stand together.

Secondly, Betroth thy self to Christ. The Covenant of Grace is the Joynture which God settles only upon Christs Spouse. *Rebecca* had not the jewels and costly raiment, till she was promised to become *Isaac's* Wife, *Gen. 24. 53.* All the Promises are *Yea and Amen* in Christ. If once thou receivest Christ, with him thou receivest them. He that owes the Tree, hath right to all the fruit that is on it. Now that thou mayest not huddle up a marriage between Christ and thee, so as to be disown'd of Christ, and it prove a nullity at last; it behoves thee to look to it, that there be found in thee what Christ expects in every soul that he espouseth. First therefore, consider whether thou canst heartily love the person of Christ. Look wisely on him again and again, as he is set forth in all his spiritual excellencies, are they such as thy heart can close with? doth his holy nature and all those heavenly graces with which he is beautified, render him desirable to thee? or couldest thou like him better if he were not so precise and exactly holy? yea, is thy heart so inflamed with a desire of him, that thou canst love him with a conjugal love? A woman may love one as a friend, whom she cannot love so as to make him her Husband. A friendly love may stand with a love of some other equal to it, yea, superiour; but a conjugal love is such as will bear neither: Canst thou find in thy heart to forsake all other, and cleave to Christ? does thy heart speak thee ready, and present thee willing to go with thy sweet Jesus, though he carry thee from Father and Fathers House? is thy confidence such of his power to protect thee from all thy Enemies, sin, wrath, and Hell, that thou canst resolutely put the life of thy soul into his hands, to be saved by the sole vertue of his blood, and his omnipotent arm; and of his care to provide for thee for this life and the other, that thou canst acquiesce in what he promiseth to do for thee? In a word, if thou hast Christ, thou must not only love him, but for his sake all thy new kindred, which by thy marriage to him thou shalt be allied unto. How canst thou fadge to call the Saints thy Brethren? Canst thou love them heartily, and forget all the old grudges thou hast had against them? Some of them thou wilt find poor and persecuted, yet Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, neither must thou. If thou findest thy heart now in such a disposition as suits these Interrogatories, I dare not deny the banes, yea, I dare not but pronounce Christ and thee Husband and Wife. Go, poor soul, (if I may call so glorious a Bride poor) go and comfort thy self with the expectation of thy Bridegrooms coming for thee, and when the evil day approaches, and death it self draws nigh, look not now with terror upon it, but rather revive with old *Jacob*, to see the Chariot which shall

carry thee over unto the embraces of thy Husband, whom thou hearest to be in so great Honour and Majesty in Heaven, as may assure thee he is able to make thee welcome when thou comest there. Amongst the *all things* which are ours by being Christs, the Apostle forgets not to name this to be one, *Death is ours*. And well he did so, or else we should never have looked upon it as a gift, but rather as a judgment. Now, soul, thou art out of any danger of hurt that the evil day can do thee. Yet there remains something for thee to do, that thou mayest walk in the comfortable expectation of the evil day. We see that gracious persons may for want of a holy care fall into such distempers, as may put a sting into their thoughts of the evil day. *David*, that at one time would not fear to walk in the valley of the shadow of death, is so affrighted at another time when he is led towards it, that he cries, *Spare me, O Lord, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence*, *Plal. 39*. The Child, though he loves his Father, may do that which may make him afraid to go home. Now, Christian, if thou wouldest live in a comfortable expectation of the evil day,

First, Labour to die to this life, and the enjoyments of it every day more and more. Death is not so strong to him, whose natural strength has been wasted by long pining sickness, as it is to him that lies but a few days, and has strength of nature to make great resistance. Truly, thus it is here, that Christian, whose love to this life and the contents of it, hath been for many years consuming and dying, will with more facility part with them, than he whose love is stronger to them. All Christians are not mortified in the same degree to the world. *Paul* tells us he died daily, he was ever sending more and more of his heart out of the world, so that by that time he came to die, all his affections were packed up and gone, which made him the more ready to follow, *corinthians, I am ready to be offered up*, *2 Tim. 4. 6*. If it be but a Tooth to pull out, the faster it stands, the more pain we have to draw it. O loosen the roots of thy affections from the world, and the tree will fall more easily.

Secondly, Be careful to approve thy self with diligence and faithfulness to God in thy place and calling. The clearer thou standest in thy own thoughts concerning the uprightness of thy heart in

the tenour of thy Christian course, the more composure thou wilt have when the evil day comes. *I beseech thee, O Lord*, (saith good *Hezekiah* at the point of death as he thought) *remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*. This cannot be our confidence, but it will be a better companion than a scolding conscience; if the blood be bad, the spirits will be tainted also; the more our life has been corrupted with hypocrisy and unfaithfulness, the weaker our Faith will be in a dying hour. There is great difference between two Children that come home at night, one from the field, where he hath been diligent and faithful about his Fathers work, and another that hath played the Truant a great part of the day; the former comes in confidently to stand before his Father, the other sneaks to bed, and is afraid his Father should see him, or ask where he hath been. O Sirs, look to your walking. There have been trying times as ever came to *England*; it has required more care and courage to keep sincerity than formerly. And that is the reason why it is so rare to find Christians (especially those whose place and calling hath been more in the wind of temptation) go off the stage at death with such a *Plaudite* of inward peace in their bosoms.

Thirdly, Familiarize the thoughts of the evil day to thy soul; handle this serpent often, walk daily in the serious meditations of it, do not run from them because they are displeasing to flesh, that is the way to encrease the terror of it. Do with your souls, when they fly off, and scared with the thoughts of affliction or death; as you use to do with your beast that is given to boggle and start as you ride on him; when he flies back and starts at a thing, you do not yield to his fear and go back, that will make him worse another time, but you ride him up close to that which he is afraid of, and in time you break him of that quality. The evil day is not such a fearful thing to thee that art a Christian, as thou shouldest start for it. Bring up thy heart close to it, mew thy soul what Christ hath done to take the sting out of it; what the sweet promises are that are given on purpose to overcome the fear of it, and what thy hopes are thou shalt get by it. These will satisfy and compose thy spirit, whereas the shunning the thoughts of it will but increase thy fear, and bring thee more into bondage to it.

CHAP. VIII.

The second Argument with which the Exhortation is pressed, drawn from the assured Victory which shall crown the souls conflict, if in this Armour, where several Points couched in the Argument are briefly handled.

Welcome now to the second Argument the Apostle useth, further to press the Exhortation; and that is taken from the glorious victory which hevers even the heads of Believers while in the fight, and shall surely crown them in the end; this is held forth in these words, *And having done all stand*. The Phrase is short, but full.

S E C T. I.

First observe, Heaven is not won with good words and a fair profession, *Having done all*. The doing Christian is the man that shall stand, when the empty boaster of his Faith shall fall. The great talkers of Religion are oft the least doers. His Religion is in vain, whose profession brings not Letters testimonial from a holy life. Sacrifice without obedience is sacrilege. Such rob God of that which he makes most account of. A great Captain once smote one of his Souldiers for railing at his Enemy, saying, That he called him not to rail on him, but to fight against him and kill him. 'Tis not crying out upon the Devil, and declaiming against sin in Prayer or Discourse, but fighting and mortifying it that God looks chiefly upon; such a one else doth but beat the air, there are no marks to be seen on his flesh and unmortified lusts that he hath fought. Paul was in earnest, he left a witness upon his body, made black and blue with strokes of mortification. It was not a little vapouring in sight of the Philistines that got David his Wife, but shedding their blood: and is it so small a matter to be Son to the King of Heaven, that thou thinkest to obtain it without giving a real proof of thy zeal for God, and hatred to sin? *Not a fruitful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man (saith the Apostle) shall be blessed in his deed.* Jam. 1. 25. Mark, not by his deed, but in his deed; he shall meet blessedness in that way of obedience he walks in. The empty Professor disappoints others, who seeing his leaves, expect fruit, but find none: and at last he disappoints himself, he thinks to reach Heaven, but shall miss of it. *Tertullian* speaks of some that think, *Satis deum habere, si corde et anima suspiciantur, licet actu immus*: God hath enough, (they think) if he be feared and revered in their hearts, though in their actions they shew it not so much, and therefore they can sin, and believe in God, and fear him never the worse: This (saith he) is to play the Adulterers, and yet be chaste; to prepare poyson for ones Father, and yet be dutiful; but let such know, (saith the same Father) that if they can sin and believe, God will pardon them with a contradiction also; he'll forgive them, but they shall

be turned into Hell for all that. As ever you would stand at last, look you be found doing the work your Lord hath left you to make up, and trust not to lying words, as the Prophet speaks, *Jer. 7.*

S E C T. II.

Doctr. 2. Secondly observe, That such is the mercy of God in Christ to his Children, that he accepts their weak endeavours (joined with sincerity and perseverance in his service) as if they were full obedience, and therefore they are here said to have *done all*. O who would not serve such a Lord! you hear servants sometimes complain of their Masters to be so rigid and strict, that they can never please them, no, not when they do their utmost; but this cannot be charged upon God: Be but so faithful as to do thy best, and God is so gracious, that he will pardon thy worst. *David* knew this Gospel indulgence, when he said, *Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. 6. *When my eye is to all thy Commandments.* The Traveller hath his eye on or towards the place he is going, though he be yet short of it; there he would be, and is putting on all he can to reach it: So stands the Saints heart to all the commands of God, he presseth on to come nearer and nearer to full obedience; such a soul shall never be put to shame. But wo to those that cover their sloth with the name of infirmity; yea, that spend their zeal and strength in the pursuit of the world or their lusts, and then think to make all up when charged therewith, That it is their infirmity, and they can serve God no better. These do by God, as those two by their Prince (*Francis the first of France*) who cut off their right hand one for another, and then made it an excuse they were lame, and so could not serve in his Gallies, for which they were sent to the Gallows. Thus many will be found at last to have disabled themselves, by refusing that help the Spirit hath offered to them, yea, wasted what they had given them; and so shall be rewarded for hypocrites as they are. God knows how to distinguish between the sincerity of a Saint in the midst of his infirmities, and the shifts of a false heart. But we will wave these, and briefly speak to four points, which lie clear in the words.

First, Here is the necessity of perseverance, *Having done all*. Secondly, Here is the necessity of divine Armour, to persevere till we have done all. Wherefore else bids he them take this Armour for this end, if they could do it without?

Thirdly, Here is the certainty of persevering and over-

overcoming at last, if clad with this Armour, else it were small encouragement to bid them take that Armour which would not surely defend them.

Fourthly, Here is the blessed result of the Saints perseverance propounded as that which will abundantly recompence all their pain and patience in the War, having done all to stand. From these follow four distinct points.

First, He that will be Christs Souldier, must persevere.

Secondly, There can be no perseverance without true grace in the heart.

Thirdly, Where true grace is, that soul shall persevere.

Fourthly, To stand at the end of this War, will abundantly recompence all our hazard and hardship endured in the war.

SECT. III.

Doctr. 1. He that will be Christs Souldier, must persevere to the end of his life in this war against Satan. This *having done all* comes in after our conflict with death: *That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day:* then follows, *And having done all.* We have not done all till that pitched battel be fought. *The last enemy is death.* The word *carry'd out* imports as much as to finish a business, and bring a matter to a full issue; so *Phil. 2. 12.* where we translate it well, *work out your salvation;* that is, perfect it, be not Christians by halves, but go through with it; the thorough Christian, is the true Christian: Not he that takes the field, but he that keeps the field; not he that sets out, but he that holds out in this holy War, deserves the name of a Saint. There is not such a thing in this sense belonging to Christianity, as an honourable retreat, not such a word of Command in all Christs military discipline, as, Fall back, and lay down your arms: No, you must fall on, and stand to your arms, till call'd off by death.

First, We are under a Covenant and Oath to do this. Formerly Souldiers used to take an Oath not to flinch from their Colours, but faithfully to cleave to their Leaders; this they called *Sacramentum militare*, a military Oath; such an Oath lies upon every Christian. It is so essential to the being of a Saint, that they are described by this, *Pf. 50. 5. Gather my Saints together, those that have made a Covenant with me.* We are not Christians till we have subscribed this Covenant, and that without any reservation. When we take upon us the profession of Christs Name, we list our selves in his Muster-roll, and by it do promise, that we will live and die with him in opposition to all his Enemies. *Every Nation will walk in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of our God;* and what is it to walk in the Name of our God, but to fight under the Banner of his Gospel, wherein his Name is displayed, by giving an eternal defiance to sin and Satan? If a Captain had not such a tie on his Souldiers, he might have them to seek when the day of battel comes: therefore Christ tells us upon what terms he will enroll us among his Disciples: *If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his*

cross, and follow me. He will not entertain us till we resign up our selves freely to his dispose, that there may be no disputing with his commands afterwards, but as one under his authority, go and come at his word.

Secondly, Perseverance is necessary, because our Enemy perseveres to oppose us. There is no truce in the Devils heart, no cessation of Arms in our Enemies Camp. If an Enemy continue to assault a City, and they within cease to resist, it is easie to tell what will follow. The Prophet that was sent to *Babel* did his errand well, withstood *Jereboams* temptation, but in his way home was drawn aside by the old Prophet, and at last slain by a Lion. Thus many flee from one temptation, but not persevering are vanquished by another; those that at one time escape his Sword, at another time are slain by it. *Josh* was hopeful when young, but it lasted not long. Yea, many precious Servants of God, not making such vigorous resistance in their last days as in their first, have fallen foully, as we see in *Solomon, Asa*, and others. Indeed it is hard when a line is drawn to a great length, to keep it so straight that it slacken not, and to hold a thing long in our hand, and not to have a nummel grow in our Fingers, so as to remit of our strength; therefore we are bid so often to hold fast the profession of our faith: but when we see an enemy gaping to catch us when we fall, methinks this should quicken us the more to it.

Thirdly, Because the promise of life and glory is settled upon the persevering Soul, the Crown stands at the Goal, he hath it that comes to the end of the Race. *To him that overcomes, will I give,* not in *prælio*, but in *bello*, not in a particular skirmish, but in the whole war. *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the whole will of God, ye might receive the promise, Heb. 10. 36.* There is a remarkable accent on that *henceforth*, which *Paul* mentions, *2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. I have fought a good fight; henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness.* Why, was it not laid up before? yes, but having persevered and come near the Goal, being within sight of home, ready to die, he takes now surer hold of the Promise. Indeed in this sense it is, that a gracious soul is nearer its salvation after every victory than it was before, because he approacheth nearer to the end of his race, which is the time promised for the receiving of the promised salvation, *Rom. 13. 10.* Then, and not till then, the Garland drops upon his head.

Use. Here we may take up a sad lamentation, in respect of the many Apostate Professors of our days. Never was this spiritual Falling-sickness more rife: Oh how many are sick of it at present, and not a few fallen asleep by it! These times of war and confusion have not made so many broken Merchants, as broken Professors: Where is the Congregation that cannot shew some who have out-lived their Profession? Not unlike the Silk-worm, which (they say) after all her spinning, works her self out of her bottom, and becomes at last a common flie. Are there not many, whose forwardness in Religion we have stood gazing on with admiration; as the Disciples on the Temple, ready to say

one to another as they to Christ, See what manner of stones these are! what polished gifts and shining graces are here! and now not one stone left upon another. Oh did you ever think, that they who went in so goodly array towards Heaven in communion with you, would after that face about, and run over to the Devils side, turn Blasphemers, Worldlings, and Atheists, as some have done. Oh what a sad change is here! *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them,* 2 Pet. 2. 21. Better never to have walkt a step towards Heaven, than to put such a scorn and reproach upon the ways of God. *Comparationem videtur egisse qui utrumque cognoverit, & judicatio pronuntiasset eum meliorem cujus se rursus esse maluerit. Tertul. de penit.* Such a one who hath known what a service Satan's is, and what Gods is, then to revolt from God to the Devil, seems to have compared one with the other, and as the result of his mature thoughts, to pronounce the Devils which he chuseth, better than Gods which he leaveth. And how is it possible that any can sin upon a higher guilt, and go to Hell under a greater load of wrath? These are they which God loathes. He that hates putting away, disdains much more to be himself thus put away. *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,* Heb. 10. 31. The Apostate is said to tread upon the Son of God, Heb. 10. 29. as if he were no better than the dirt under his feet. Well, he shall have treading for treading, God himself will set his foot upon him, Psal. 119. 118. *Thou hast trodden down all that err from thy statutes.* And who (think you) will be weary soonest? He that is under-foot, bears the weight of the whole man upon him. To be under the foot of God, is to lye under the whole weight of Gods wrath. Oh pity and pray for such forlorn souls; they are objects of the one, and subjects of the other; though they are fallen low, yet not into Hell: Now and then we see an *Entychus* raised, that hath fallen from such a height. *And you that stand, take heed lest you fall.*

SECT. 4.

Doltr. 2. Secondly, A soul void of Divine Armour, cannot persevere. What this Divine Armour is, I have shewn, and the Apostle here doth in the several pieces of it. The sanctifying graces of Gods Spirit, are this Armour: One that hath not these wrought in him, will never hold out to pass all the stages of this Christian race, to fight all the battels that are to be fought before victory is to be had. Common gifts of the Spirit, such as illumination, conviction, sudden pangs and flushing heats of affection may carry out the creature for a while with a goodly appearance of zeal for God, and forwardness in Profession; but the strength these affords is soon spent. *John's* hearers mentioned, *Joh. 5. 35.* got some light and heat by sitting under his burning Ministry; but how long did it last? *Ye were willing to rejoyce for a season.* They were very beautiful colours that were drawn on them, but

not laid in oyl, and therefore soon washed off again. The foolish Virgins made as great a blaze with their lamps, and did expect as good a day when Christ should come, as the wise Virgins, but (alas!) their lamps are out before he appeared, and as good never a whit, as never the better. The stony ground more forward than the best soil; the seed comes up immediately, as if a crop should soon have been reaped, but a few nipping Frosts turn its hue, and the day of the harvest proves a day of desperate sorrow. All these instances, and many more in Scripture do evince, that nothing short of solid grace, and a principle of Divine life in the soul, will persevere. How forward soever Formalists and slighty Professors are to promise to themselves hopes of reaching Heaven, they will find it too long a step for their short-breathed souls to attain. The reasons are,

First, Such want a principle of Divine life to draw strength from Christ to persevere them in their course. That by which the gracious soul it self perseveres, is the continual supply it receives from Christ; as the arm and foot is kept alive in the body by those vital spirits which they receive from the heart: *I live* (saith Paul) *yet not I, but Christ in me*; that is, I live, but at Christs cost; he holds, as my soul, so my grace in life. Now the carnal person wanting this union, must needs waste and consume in time; he hath no root to stand on; A Carcase when once it begins to rot, never recovers, but every day grows worse till it runs all into putrefaction; no Salve or Plaster will do it good; but where there is a principle of life, there when a member is wounded, nature sends supplies of spirits, and helps to work with the salve for a cure. There is the same difference between a gracious person and an ungracious: See them opposed in this respect, *Prov. 14. 17.* *The righteous man falls seven times a day, and riseth, but the wicked falleth into mischief*: that is, in falling he falls further, and hath no power to recover himself. When *Cain* sinned, see how he falls further and further, he a stone down a hill, never stays till he comes to the bottom of despair; from envying his brother to malice, from malice to murder, from murder to impudent lying, and brazen-fac'd boldness to God himself, and from that to despair; so true is that, *2 Tim. 2. 13.* *Evil men shall wax worse and worse.* But now when a Saint falls, he riseth, because when he falls he hath a principle of life to cry out to Christ, and such an interest in Christ as stirs him up to help; *Lord save me*, said *Peter*, (when he began to sink) and presently Christs hand is put forth; he chides him for his unbelief, but he helps him.

Secondly, An unregenerate soul hath no assurance for the continuance of those common gifts of the Spirit he hath at present, they come on the same terms that temporal enjoyments do to such a one. A carnal person, when he hath his table most sumptuously spread, cannot shew any word of promise under Gods hand, that he shall be provided for the next meal. God gives these things to the wicked, as we a crust or nights lodging to a Beggar in our Barn; 'tis our bounty, such a one could not sue us for denying the same. So in the common gifts

of

of the Spirit, God was not bound to give them, nor is he to continue them. Thou hast some knowledge of the things of God, thou maist for all this dye without knowledge at last: Thou art a sinner in chains, restraining grace keeps thee in; this may be taken off, and thou let loose to thy lusts as freely as ever. And how can he persevere, that in one day may from praying fall to cursing; from a whining complaining conscience, come to have a feared conscience?

Thirdly, Every unregenerate man, when most busie with profession, hath those engagements lye upon him, that will necessarily, when put to it, take him off one time or other. One is engaged to the World; and when he can come to a good Market for that, then he goes away, he cannot have both, and now he'll make it appear which he loved best: *Demas hath forsaken us, and embraced this present world.* Another is a slave to his lust; and when this calls him, he must go in spite of Profession, Conscience, God and all. *Herod feared John, and did many things; but love is stronger than fear; his love to Herodias overcomes his fear of John, and makes him cut off at once the head of John, and the hopeful buddings which appeared in the tenderness of his conscience, and begun reformation.* One root of bitterness or other will spring up in such a one. If the complexion of the soul be profane, it will at last come to it, however for a while there may be some religious colour appear in the mans face from some other external cause.

Use. This shews us what is the root of all final Apostasie; and that is, the want of a thorough change of the heart. The Apostate doth not lose the grace he had, but discovers he never had any; and 'tis no wonder to hear that he proves bankrupt, that was worse than nought when he first set up. Many take up their Saintship upon trust, and trade in the duties of Religion with the credit they have gained from others opinion of them. They believe themselves to be Christians, because others hope them to be such; and so their great business is, by a zeal in those exercises of Religion that lye outmost, to keep up the credit they have abroad, but do not look to get a stock of solid grace within, which should maintain them in their Profession; and this proves their undoing at last. Let it therefore make us in the fear of God, to consider upon what score we take up our Profession. Is there that within, which bears proportion to our outward zeal? Have we laid a good bottom? Is not the superstructure top-heavy, jetting too far beyond the weak foundation? They say, Trees shoot as much in the root under ground, as in the branches above, and so doth true grace. Oh remember what was the perishing of the seed in the stony ground; it lacked root, and why so? but because it was stony. Be willing the Plough should go deep enough to humble thee for sin, and rend thy heart from sin. The soul effectually brought out of the love of sin as sin, will never be thorough-friends with it again. In a word, be serious to find out the great spring that sets all thy wheels on motion in thy religious trade. Do as men that would know how much they are

worth, who set what they owe on one side, and what stock they have on the other; and then when they have laid out enough to discharge all debts and engagements, what remains to themselves they may call their own. Thus do thou consider what thou standest engaged to, thy worldly credit, profit, slavish fear of God, and selfish desire of happiness; and when thou hast allowed for all these, see then what remains of thy fear of God, love to God, &c. If nothing, thou art nought; if any, the less there be, the weaker Christian thou art; and when thou comest to be tryed in Gods fire, thou wilt suffer loss of all the other, which as hay and stubble will be burnt up.

SECT. 5.

Dolt. 3. Every soul clad with this Armour of God, shall stand and persevere. Or thus, True grace can never be vanquished. The Christian is born a Conqueror, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against him. *He that is born of God overcometh the world.* 1 John 5. 4. Mark from whence the victory is dated, even from his birth: There is victory sown in his new nature, even that seed of God, which will keep him from being swallowed up by sin or Satan. As Christ rose, never to dye more; so doth he raise souls from the Grave of sin, never to come under the power of spiritual death more. *These holy ones of God cannot see corruption.* Hence he that believes, is said in the present tense to have eternal life. As the Law that came four hundred years after could not make void the promise to Abraham; so nothing that intervenes can hinder the accomplishing of that promise of eternal life, which was given and passed to Christ in their behalf before the foundation of the world. If a Saint could any way miscarry and fall short of this eternal life, it must be from one of these three causes. 1. Because God may forsake the Christian, and withdraw his grace and help from him; Or, 2. Because the Believer may forsake God; Or lastly, Because Satan may pluck him out of the hands of God. A fourth I know not. Now none of these can be.

First, God can never forsake the Christian. Some unadvised speeches have dropt from tempted souls, *covering some fears of Gods casting them off; but they have been confuted, and have eaten their words with shame,* as we see in *Job* and *David*. Oh what admirable security hath the great God given his children in this particular!

First, *In Promises.* *He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,* Heb. 13. 5. Five negatives in that promise, as so many seals to ratifie it to our Faith: He assures us there never did nor can so much as arise a repenting thought in his heart concerning the purposes of his love and special grace towards his Children. Rom. 11. 29. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,* even the believers sin against him, their froward carriage stirs not up thoughts of casting them off, but of reducing them: *For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; I have seen his*

ways and will heal them, Isa. 57. 17, 18. The water of the Saints failings, cast on the fire of Gods love, cannot quench it; *Whom he loves, he loves to the end.*

Secondly, God to give further weight and credit to our unbelieving and misgiving hearts, seals his promise with an oath. See Isa. 54. 9, 10. *With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer; this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should not return over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee.* Yea, he goes on and tells there, *The mountains shall depart,* (meaning at the end of the world, when the whole frame of the Heavens and Earth shall be dissolved) *but his kindness shall not depart, neither shall his covenant of peace be removed.* Now lest any should think this was some Charter belonging to the Jews alone, we find it, v. 17. *setled on every servant of God as his portion: This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.* And surely God that is so careful to make his childrens inheritance sure to them, will con-
mt them little thanks, who busie their wits to invalid and weaken his conveyances, yea, disprove his will: If they had taken a bribe, they could not plead Satans cause better.

Thirdly, In the actual fulfilling these promises, (which he hath made to Believers) to Christ their Attorney. As God, before the world began, gave a promise of eternal life to Christ for them, so now hath he given actual possession of that glorious place to Christ (as their Advocate and Attorney) where that eternal life shall be enjoyed by them; for as he came upon our errand from Heaven, so thither he returned again to take and hold possession of that inheritance, which God had of old promised, and he in one sum at his death had paid for. And now what ground of fear can there be in the believers heart concerning Gods love standing firm to him, when he sees the whole Covenant performed already to Christ for him, whom God hath not only called to, sanctified for, and upheld in the great work he was to finish for us, but also justified in his resurrection and Gaol-delivery, and received him into Heaven, there to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high, by which he hath not only possession for us, but full power to give it unto all believers?

A second occasion of fear to the believer that he shall not persevere, may be taken from himself. He has many sad fears and tremblings of heart, that he shall at last forsake God: The journey is long to Heaven, and his grace weak; Oh, saith he, is it not possible that this little grace should fail, and I fall short at last of glory? Now here there is such provision made in the Covenant, as scatters this cloud also.

First, The Spirit of God is given on purpose to prevent this, Christ left his Mother with John, but his Saints with his Spirit, to tutor and keep them that they should not lose themselves in their journey to Heaven. O how sweet is that place, Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judge-*

ments and do them. He doth not say, they shall have his Spirit, if they will walk in his statutes; no, his Spirit shall cause them to do it. But may be thou art afraid thou maist grieve him, and so he in anger leave thee, and thou perish for want of his help and counsel. *Ans^r.* The Spirit of God is indeed sensible of unkindness, and upon a Saints sin may withdraw in regard of present assistance, but never in regard of his care; as a Mother may let her froward child go alone, till it get a knock, that may make it cry to be taken up again into her arms, but still her eyes are on it that it shall not fall into mischief. The Spirit withdrew from Samson, and he fell into the Philistines hands; and this makes him cry to God, and the Spirit puts forth his strength in him again. Thus here, indeed the office of the Spirit is to abide for ever with the Saints, John 14. 16. *He shall send you another Comforter, that he may abide for ever with you.*

Secondly, It is one main business of Christs intercession, to obtain of God perseverance for our weak graces. *I have prayed* (saith Christ to Peter) *that thy faith fail not.* But was not that a particular priviledge granted to him, which may be denied to another? O Sirs, do we think that Christs love looks alquint? doth he pray for one child more than another? Such fears and jealousies foolish children are ready to take up; and therefore Christ prevents them, by bidding Peter in the very next words, *When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren;* Luke 21. 31. that is, when thou feelest the efficacy and force of my Prayer for thy faith, carry this good news to them, that their hearts may be strengthened also: And what strengthening had it been to them, if Christ prayed not for them as well as for Peter? Does Christ pray for us? yea, doth he not live to pray for us? Oh how can children of so many prayers, of such prayers perish? The Saints prayers have a mighty power. Jacob wrestled and had power with God; this was his sword and bow (to allude to what he said of the parcel of ground he took from the Amorite) by which he got the victory and had power with God. This was the Key with which *Elijah* opened and shut Heaven. And if the weak prayers of Saints (coming in his Name) have such credit in Heaven, that with them they can go to Gods treasure, and carry away as much as their arm of Faith can hold: O then, what prevalency has Christs intercession, who is a Son, an obedient Son, that is come from finishing his great work on earth, and now prays his Father for nothing but what he hath bid him ask, yea, for nothing but what he is before-hand with him for, and all this to a Father that loves those he prays for as well as himself? Bid Satan avaunt. Say not thy weak faith shall perish, till thou hearest that Christ hath left praying, or meets with a repulse.

Thirdly, Let us see whether Satan be able to pluck the Christian away, and step betwixt him and home. I have had occasion to speak of this Subject in another place, the less here shall serve. Abundant provision is made against his assaults. The Saint is wrapt up in the everlasting arms of Almighty Power; and what can a cursed Devil do against

God, who laid those chains on him which he cannot shake off? When he is able to pluck that dart of Divine fury out of his own conscience which God hath fastned there, then let him think of such an enterprise as this. How can he overcome thee, that cannot tempt thee but in Gods appointed time? And if God set Satan his time to assault the Christian whom he loves so dearly, surely it shall be when he shall be repulsed with greatest shame.

Use 1. Away then with that Doctrine which faith, One may be a Saint to day, and none to morrow; now a *Peter*, anon a *Judas*: O how unfavoury stuff is this! a principle it is that at once crosseth the main design of God in the Gospel-Covenant, reflects sadly on the honour of Christ, and wounds the Saints comfort to the heart.

First, It is derogatory to Gods design in the Gospel-Covenant, which we find plainly to be this, That his children might be put into a state sure and safe from miscarrying at last, which by the first Covenant made was not. See *Rom. 4. 16.* Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace, to the end the Promise might be sure to all the seed. God on purpose because of the weakness of the first Covenant through the mutable nature of man, makes a new Covenant of a far different constitution and frame, not of works as that was, but of Faith, and why? the Apostle tells us, that it might be sure to all the seed, that not one soul, who by Faith should be adopted into Abraham's family, and so become a child of the promise, should fail of inheriting the blessing of the Promise, which is eternal life; called so, *Tir. 1. 2.* and all this because the promise is founded upon grace, that is, Gods immutable good pleasure in Christ, and not upon the variable and inconstant obedience of man, as the first Covenant was. But if a Saint may finally fall, then is the promise no more sure in this Covenant than it was in that, and so God should not have his end he propounds.

Secondly, It reflects sadly on Christs honour, both as he is intrusted with the Saints salvation, and also as he is interested in it. First, As he is intrusted with the Saints salvation. He tells us they are given him of his Father for this very end, that he should give them eternal life; yea, that power which he hath over all flesh was given him, to render him every way able to effect this one business, *John 17. 2.* He accepts the charge, owns them as his sheep, knows them every one, and promiseth, *He will give them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand,* *John 10. 27, 28.* Now how well do they confute with Christs honour, that say his sheep may dye in a ditch of final Apostasie, notwithstanding all this? Secondly, As he is interested in the salvation of every Saint. The life of his own glory is bound up in the eternal life of his Saints. It's true, when Adam fell, God did save his stake; but how can Christ who is so nearly united to every believing soul? There was a league of friendship betwixt God and Adam; but no such union as here, where Christ and his Saints make but one Christ, for which his Church is called *Christ*, *1 Cor. 12. 12.* As the body is one, and hath many members, and

all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so is Christ. Christ and his members make one Christ: Now is it possible a piece of Christ can be found at last burning in Hell? Can Christ be a cripple Christ? Can this member drop off and that? 'Tis as possible that all, as any should; and how can Christ part with his mystical members, and not with his glory? Doth not every member add an ornament to the body, yea, an honour? The Church is called the *fulness of him*, *Eph. 1. 23.* O how dishonourable is it to Christ, that we should think he should want any of his fulness? and how can the man be full and compleat that wants a member?

Thirdly, It wounds the Saints comfort to the heart, and lays their joy a bleeding. Paul faith, he did not *καταλείπειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *2 Cor. 2. 17.* he did not dash the generous Wine of Gods Word with the water of mans conceits; no, he gave them pure Gospel. Truly this principle of Saints falling from grace gives a sad dash to the sweet Wine of the Promises; the soul-reviving comfort that sparkles in them ariseth from the sure conveyance with which they are in Christ made over to the believers to have and to hold for ever. Hence called the *sure mercies of David*, *Act. 13. 34.* mercies that shall never fail. This, this indeed is Wine that makes glad the heart of a Saint; though he may be whipt in the house when he sins, yet he shall not be turned out of door. As God promised in the type to *David's* seed, *Psal. 89. 33.* *Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail,* and ver. 36. *His seed shall endure for ever.* Could any thing separate the believer from the love of God in Christ, this would be as a hole at the bottom of his cup to leak out all his joy; he might then fear every temptation or affliction he meets would slay him, and so the wickeds curse would be the Saints portion. His life would ever hang in doubt before him, and the fearful expectation of his final miscarriage, which he sees may befall him, would eat up the joy of his present hope. Now how contrary such a frame of heart is to the Spirit of adoption, and full assurance of hope, which the grace of the new Covenant gives, he that runs may read in the Word.

Use 2. This truth prepares a sovereign cordial to restore the fainting spirits of weak believers, who are surprized with many fears concerning their persevering, and holding out to the end of their warfare. Be of good cheer, poor soul, God hath given Christ the life of every soul within the Ark of his Covenant. Your eternal safety is provided for; *Whom he loves he loves to the end*, *John 13. 1.* Hath he made thee willing in the day of his power to march under his banner, and espouse his quarrel against sin and Hell? the same power that overcame thy rebellious heart to himself, will overcome all thy Enemies within and without for thee; Say not, Thou art a bruised Reed, with this he will break Satans head, and not cease till he hath brought forth judgement unto compleat victory in thy soul. He that can make a few wounded men rise up and take a strong City, can make a wounded

spirit

spirit triumph over sin and Devils. *Jer. 37. 10.* The Ark stood in the midst of *Jordan* till the whole Camp of *Israel* was safely got over into *Canaan*, *Josh. 3.* And so doth the Covenant (which the Ark did but typifie) yea, Christ, Covenant, and all, stand to secure the Saints a safe passage to Heaven. If but one believer drowns, the Covenant must drown with him: Christ and the Saints are put together as co-heirs of the same inheritance, *Rom. 8. 17.* *If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* We cannot dispute against one, but we question the firmness of the others title. When you hear Christ is turned out of Heaven, or himself to be willing to sell his inheritance there, then, poor Christian, fear thy coming thither, and not till then. Co heirs cannot sell the inheritance except both give up their right, which Christ will never do, nor suffer thee.

Use 3. Thirdly, This truth calls for a word or two of caution. Though there is no fear of a Saints falling from grace, yet there is great danger of others falling from the top of this comfortable Doctrine into a careless security, and presumptuous boldness; and therefore a battlement is very necessary, that from it we may with safety to our souls, stand and view the pleasant prospect this truth presents to our eye. That flower from which the Bee sucks honey, the Spider draws poison. That which is a restorative to the Saints grace, proves an incentive to the lust of a wicked man. What *Paul* said of the Law, we may truly of the Gospel: Sin taking occasion from the grace of the Gospel, and the sweet promises thereof, deceives the carnal heart, and works in him all manner of wickedness. Indeed sin seldom grows so rank any where, as in those who water its roots with the grace of the Gospel. Two ways this Doctrine may be abused.

First, Into a neglect of duty.

Secondly, Into a liberty to sin: Take heed of both.

First, Beware of falling into a neglect of duty upon this score; If a Christian, thou canst not fall away from grace. Take for an antidote against this, three particulars.

First, There are other arguments to invite, yea, that will constrain thee to a constant vigorous performing of duty, though the fear of falling away should not come in, or else thou art not a Christian; what? nothing make the child diligent about his Fathers business, but fear of being disinherited and turned out of doors? There is sure some better motive to duty in a Saints heart, or else Religion is a melancholy work. Speak for your selves, O ye Saints, is self preservation all you pray for, and hear for? should a messenger come from Heaven, and tell you Heaven were yours, would this make you give over your spiritual trade, and not care whether you had any more acquaintance with God till you came thither? O how harsh doth this sound in your ears! There are such principles engraven in the Christians bosom, that will not suffer a strangeness long to grow betwixt God and him. He is under the Law of a new life, which carries him naturally to desire communion with God, as the child doth to see the face of his dear

Father; and every duty is a Mount wherein God presents himself to be seen and enjoyed by every Christian.

Secondly, To neglect duty upon such a persuasion, is contrary to Christs practice and counsel. *First*, His practice. Though Christ never doubted of his Fathers love, nor questioned the happy issue of all his temptations; agonies, and sufferings; yet he prays, and prays again more earnestly, *Luke 22. 41.* *Secondly*, His counsel and command. He told *Peter*, that Satan had begged leave to have him to sift him. But withal he comforts him (who was to be hardest put to it) with this, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Sure our Saviour by this provision made for him and the rest, means to save them a labour that they need not watch or pray. No such matter, after this, as you may see, *verse 40.* He calls them up to duty, *Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* Christs praying for them was to strengthen their Faith, when they should themselves pray for the same mercy; not to nourish their sloth, that they needed not to pray. Christs prayers in Heaven for his Saints are all heard already, but the return of them is reserved to be inclosed in the answer God sends to their own prayers: The Christian cannot in faith expect to receive the mercies Christ prays for in Heaven, so long as he lives in the neglect of his duty on earth. They stand ready against he call for them by the prayer of Faith, and if they be not worth sending this messenger to Heaven, truly they are worth little.

Thirdly, Consider, that although the Christian be secured from a total and final apostasy, yet he may fall sadly, to the bruising of his conscience, enfeebling his grace, and reproach of the Gospel, which sure are enough to keep the Christian upon his watch, and the more, because ordinarily the Saints backslidings begin in their duties. As it is with tradesmen in the world, they first grow careless of their business, often out of their Shop, and then they go behind-hand in their estates: So here, first remiss in a duty, and then fall into a decay of their graces and comforts; yea, sometimes into those ways that are scandalous. A stuff loseth its gloss before it wears: the Christian, the lustre of his grace, in the lively exercise of duty, and then the strength of it.

Secondly, Take heed of abusing this Doctrine unto a liberty to sin; shall we sin because grace abounds? grow loose because we have God fast bound in his promise? God forbid, none but a Devil would teach us this Logick. It was a great height of sin those wretched Jews came to, who could quaff and carouse it while death looked in upon them at the windows, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.* They discovered their Atheism therein. But what a prodigious stature in sin must that man be grown to, that can sin under the protection of the Promise, and draw his encouragement to sin, from the everlasting love of God? Let us eat and drink, for we are sure to live and be saved. Grace cannot dwell in that heart which draws such a cursed conclusion from the premises of Gods grace; the Saints have not so learned

Christ. The inference the Apostle makes from the sweet priviledges we enjoy in the Covenant of grace, is not to wallow in sin; but having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. 'Tis the nature of faith, (the grace that trades with promises) to purifie the heart. Now the more certain report faith brings of Gods love from the promise of the soul, the more it purifies the heart, because love, by which faith works, is thereby more enflamed to God; and if once this affection takes fire, the room becomes too hot for sin to stay there.

SECT. VI.

The fourth note and last is, That it will abundantly recompence all the hardship and trouble the Christian endures in this war against Sin and Satan, that he shall be able when the war is ended to stand. In mans wars all do not get by them that fight in them, the gains of these are commonly put into a few Pockets. The common Souldiers endure most of the hardship, but go away with little of the profit, they fight to make a few that are great, yet greater, and are many times themselves turned off at last, with what will hardly pay for the cure of their wounds, or keep them from starving in a poor Hospital. But in this war there is none loseth, but he that runs away. A glorious reward there is for every faithful Souldier in Christs Camp, and that is wrapt up in this phrase, *Having done all to stand*. Now in this place, *to stand*, imports three things, which laid together will clear the point.

First, *To stand*, in this place, is to stand Conquerours. An Army, when conquered, is said to fall before their enemy, and the Conquerour to stand, Lev. 26. Dan. 11.25. Every Christian shall at the end of the War stand a Conquerour over his vanquished lusts, and Satan that headed them. Many a sweet victory the Christian hath here over Satan: But (alas!) the joy of these Conquests is again interrupted with fresh alarms from his rallied enemy. One day he hath the better, and may be the next he puts us to the hazard of another battel, much ado he hath to keep what he hath got: yea, his victories are such as send him bleeding out of the field: Though he repulses the temptation at last, yet the wounds his conscience gets in the fight, do over-cast the glory of the victory. 'Tis seldom the Christian comes off without some sad complaint of the treachery of his own heart, which had like to have lost the day, and betrayed him into his enemies hand. But for thy eternal comfort, know (poor Christian) there is a blessed day coming, which shall make a full and final decision of the quarrel betwixt thee and Satan; thou shalt see this enemies Camp quite broke up; not a weapon left in his hand to lift up against thee. Thou shalt tread upon his high places, from which he hath made so many shots at thee. Thou shalt see them all dismantled and demolished, till there be not left standing any one corruption in thy bosom, for a Devil to hide and harbour himself in. Satan, at whose approach thou hast so trembled, shall then

be subdued under thy feet: he that hath so oft bid thee bow down, that he might go over thy soul, and trample upon all thy glory, shall now have his neck laid to be trodden on by thee. Were there nothing else to be expected as the fruits of our watching and praying, weeping and mourning, severe duties of mortification and self-denial, with whatever else our Christian warfare puts us upon but this, our labour sure would not be in vain in the Lord. Yea, blessed watching and praying, happy tears and wounds we meet with in this war; may they but at last end in a full and eternal victory over sin and Satan. Bondage is one of the worst of evils. The baser an enemy is, the more abhorred by noble spirits. *Saul* feared to fall into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, and to be abused by their scorn and reproaches more than a bloody death. Who baser than Satan? What viler tyrant than sin? Glorious then will the day be, wherein we shall praise God for delivering us out of the hands of all our sins, and from the hand of Satan. But dismal to you (sinners) who at the same time, wherein you shall see the Saints stand with Crowns of victory on their heads, must like fettered captives be dragged to Hells dungeon, there to have your ear bored unto an eternal bondage under your lusts. And what more miserable sentence can God himself pass upon you? Here sin is pleasure, there it will be your torment. Here a sweet bit, and goes down glib, but there it will stick in your throats. Here you have futable provision to entertain your lusts withal; Palaces for pride to dwell and strut her self in; delicious fare for your wanton palats; Houses and Lands, with Coffers of Silver and Gold for your covetous hearts, by their self-pleasing thoughts to sit brooding upon: But you will find none of these there; Hell is a barren place, nothing grows in that land of darkness to solace and recreate the sinners minds. You shall have your lusts, but want the food you long for. O what a torment must that needs be, to have a soul sharp set, even to a ravenous hunger after sin, but chain'd up where it can come at nothing it would have to satisfy its lusts: for a proud wretch, that could wish he might domineer over all the world, yea, over God himself if he would let him, to be kept down in such a dungeon as Hell is, O how it will cut! for the malicious sinner, whose heart swells with rancour against God and his Saints, that he could pluck them out of Gods bosom, yea, God out of his throne, if he had power, to find his hands so manacled, that he can do nothing against them he so hates: O how this will torment! Speak, O you Saints, whose partial victory over sin at present is so sweet to you, that you would chuse a thousand deaths, sooner than return to your old bondage under your lusts: how glorious then is that day in your eye, when this shall be compleated in a full and eternal conquest, never to have anything to do more with sin or Satan!

Secondly, *To stand*, is here to stand justified and acquitted at the great day of judgment. The phrase is frequent in Scripture, which sets out the solemn discharge they shall have then by standing in judgment, Psal. 1. 5. *The wicked shall not stand*

in the judgement; that is, they shall not be justified, *Psal. 130. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?* that is, who shall be discharged? The great God, upon whose errand we come into the world, hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world by Jesus Christ; a solemn day it will be, when all that ever lived on earth, high and low, good and bad, shall meet in one Assembly to make their personal appearance before Christ, and from his mouth to receive their eternal doom, who shall in his Majestick robes of glory ascend the awful seat of Judicature, attended with his illustrious train and guard of Angels about him, as so many Officers ready to execute and perform his pleasure according to the definitive sentence that he shall pronounce, either to conduct those blessed ones whom he shall justify into his glorious Kingdom, or bind them hand and foot to be cast into Hells unquenchable flames whom he shall condemn. I do not wonder that *Pauls* Sermon on this subject did make an earth-quake in *Felix* his conscience: but rather that any should be so far gone in a Lethargy, and dedolent numness of conscience, as the thought of this day cannot recover them to their sense and feeling. O Sirs, do you not vote them happy men and women that shall speed well on this day? are not your thoughts enquiring who those blessed souls are, which shall be acquitted by the lively voice of Christ the Judge? You need not ascend to search the rolls of election in Heaven; here you may know they are such as fight the Lords battels on earth against Satan, in the Lords Armour, and that to the end of their lives. These having done all shall stand in judgement. And were it but at a mans bar, some Court-Martial, where a Souldier stood upon tryal for his life, either to be condemned as a Traitor to his Prince, or cleared as faithful in his trust; O how such a one would listen to hear how it would go with him, and be over-joyed when the Judge pronounces him innocent! Well may such be bid to fall down on their knees, thank God and the Judge that have saved their lives; how much more ravishing will the sweet voice of Christ be in the Saints ears, when he shall in the face of men and Angels make publick declaration of their righteousness! O how confounded will Satan then be, who was their accuser to God and their own consciences also, ever threatening them with the terrour of that day! how blank will the wicked world be, to see the dirt that they had thrown by their calumnies and lying reports on the Saints faces, wiped off with Christs own hand; they from Christs mouth to be justified as sincere, whom they had called hypocrites! will not this, O ye Saints, be enough for all the scorn you were laden with from the world, and conflict you endured with the Prince of the world? But this is not all. Therefore

Thirdly, *To stand*, doth here also (as the complement of their reward) denote the Saints standing in Heavens glory. Princes when they would reward any of their subjects, that in their wars have done eminent service to the Crown, (as the utmost they can do for them) do prefer them to Court there to enjoy their Princely favour, and stand in

some place of honourable service for them continually. *Solomon* sets it out as the greatest reward of faithful subjects, *to stand before Kings*. Heaven is the royal City, where the great God keeps his Court. The happiness of glorious Angels is to stand there before God. *I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God, Luke 1. 19.* That is, I am one of those heavenly spirits who wait on the great God, and stand before his face, as Courtiers do about their Prince. Now such honour shall every faithful soul have. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by, Zech. 3. 7.* He alludes to the Temple, which had rooms joining to it, for the Priests that waited on the Lord in his holy service there. Or to Courtiers, that have stately Galleries and Lodgings becoming their place at Court, allowed them in the Kings Palace they wait upon. Thus all the Saints (whose representative *Joshua* was) shall, after they have kept the Lords charge in a short lifes service on earth, be called up to stand before God in Heaven, where with Angels they shall have their Galleries and Mansions of glory also. O happy they who shall stand before the Lord in glory! The greatest Peers of a Realm (such as Earls, Marquesses and Dukes) count it greater honour to stand before their King, though bare-headed, and oft upon their knee, than to live in the Country, where all bow and stand bare to them; yea, let but their Prince forbid them coming to Court, and 'tis not their great estates, or respect they have where they live, will content them. 'Tis better to wait in Heaven, than to reign on earth. 'Tis sweet standing before the Lord here in an Ordinance; one day in the worship of God is better than many else-where; O what then is it to stand before God in glory! If the Saints Spikenard sendeth forth so sweet a smell, while the King sits at his Table here in a Sermon or Sacraments, *Cant. 1. 12.* O then what joy must needs flow from their near attendance on him, as he sits at his Table in Heaven, which when God first made, it was intended by him to be that Chamber of Prefence, in which he would present himself to be seen of, and enjoyed by his Saints in all his glory! I know nothing would have a more powerful, yea, universal operation upon a Saints spirit, than the frequent and spiritual consideration of that blissful state in Heaven, which shall at last crown all their sad conflicts here on earth. None like this sword to cut the very sinews of temptation, and behead those lusts, which defie and out-brave whole troops of other arguments. It is almost impossible to sin with lively thoughts and hopes of that glory. 'Tis when the thoughts of Heaven are long out of the Christians sight, and he knows not what is become of his hopes to that glorious place, that he begins to set up some Idol (as *Israel* the Calf in *Moses* his absence) which he may dance before. But let Heaven come in sight, and the Christians heart will be well warmed with the thoughts of it, and you may as soon persuade a King to throw his Royal Diadem into a sink, and wallow with his Robes in a kennel, as a Saint to sin with expectation of Heavens glory. Sin is a Devils

Devils work, not a Saints, who is a Peer in Heaven, and waits every hour for the Writ that shall call him to stand with Angels and glorified Saints before the Throne of God. This would cheer the Christians heart, and confirm him when the fight is hottest, and the bullets flie thickest from men and Devils, to think, 'tis Heaven all this is for, where it's worth having a place, though we go through fire and water to it. *'Tis before the Lord* (saith David to scoffing Michol) *that chose me before thy Father and all his house; therefore I will play before the Lord, and I will yet be more vile than thus,* 2 Sam. 6. 21. Thus, Christian, wouldst thou throw off the vipers of reproaches, which from the fire of the wicked's malice flie upon thee? 'Tis for God that I pray, hear, mortifie my lust, deny my self of my carnal sports, profits, and pleasures, that God who hath passed by Kings and Princes, to chuse me a poor wretch to stand before him in glory; therefore I will be yet more vile than thus. O Sirs, were there not another world to enjoy God in, yet should we not while we have our being serve our Maker? The Heavens and the Earth obey his Law, that are capable of no reward for doing his will. *Quench Hell,*

burn Heaven (saith a holy man) *yet I will love and fear my God.* How much more, when the everlasting arms of mercy stand ready stretcht to carry you, as soon as the fight is over, into the blissful presence of God! You have servants of your own so ingenious and observant, that can follow your work hard abroad in all weathers; and may they but when they come home, weary and hungry at night, obtain a kind look from you, and some tender care over them, they are very thankful. *Tea* (saith one, to shame the sluggish Christian) *how many hundred miles will the poor Spaniel run after his master in a journey, who gets nothing but a few crumbs, or a bone from his Masters Trencher?* In a word, which is more, the Devils slaves, what will they not do and venture at his command, who hath not so much to give them as you to your dog, not a crust, not a drop of water to cool their tongue? and shall not the joy of Heaven which is set before the Christian, into which he shall assuredly enter, make him run his race, endure a short scuffle of temptation and affliction? yea sure, and make him reckon also that *these* are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in him.

9 April 1750

PART.

To the Worshipfull

THOMAS DARCY, Esq;

AND

M^{rs}. SISILIA DARCY,

His Religious Confort, at Kentwell-Hall, in Suffolk.

IF my Ministry be, or ever was a mercy to the souls of my dear People in Lavenham, they, with me, have the more cause to bless God for Sr. Simonds D'Eves, your much honoured Father, who with such a noble freeness gave them their choice in settling me amongst them. And by whose favour (under God) I have many years enjoyed the royalty of fishing for souls in their stream. A privilege, which my God (I hope) will enable me to value at a higher rate (how mercenary soever we are thought by many) than the temporal emoluments of the place. Some years are now past, since God was pleased (for our sin I fear) to take him from us; by whose death, and many other men of honour, that have their heads now laid with his among the clouds; the consumptive body of this our Nation, hath lost so much of her best blood and spirits, as is seen in her pale face to this day. And now, this Worthy Gentleman, being removed beyond the tender of my homage, my obligations to him become payable to you both: Your Lady by descent in her Fathers right, and your self by alliance in hers, may justly claim the debt, were it worth the challenging. But to save you the trouble, these lines are sent to make publick confession of the same. Indeed there are so many to witness it, that should I by a dishonest ingratitude have thought to conceal it, I should have but taken pains to put my self to shame before the world. I suppose it would not much please you, that my pen here should tell the world any thing of your Fathers worth, with which they were so well acquainted, before he left it: And besides, you know, the unhappiness of great favours is such, as brings their receivers under a suspicion of flattery, for that which in the mouth of a disobliged person, would be counted true and modest. I shall therefore only say this, the more to provoke you both to a careful imitation of him: You have so fair a copy left you, in the example of a worthy and Religious Father (a happiness not over-common among the children of great ones) that to scribble after it, would be much to your dishonour. Both your educations have been with the greatest advantage for piety. And blessed be God; we see, that the Religious principles, with which so early you were sown, did not fall upon dead Earth. The Name of Religion is not vile, or contemptible to you, as to many of your rank it is; who looking upon its beautiful face with a carnal eye, through a crackt glass (the scandals I mean of broken Professors) can find no comeliness for which they should desire it; yea, have very unlovely and deformed images framed of it in their thoughts. The worship of God is not proscribed your family, as in the houses of many great ones, who it seems, think God himself too mean company for them; and count it a greater disgrace to have the Bible used in their Parlour, than Cards and Dice.

They were not the most unwelcome guests to your house, that bring God along with them, and desire to leave something of God behind them. You begin well, Noble Friends, blessed be God for this Religious Spring putting forth in your youth. Allow me (I pray) the liberty to love you freely; and now my pen is serving you, to do it faithfully. You are in a very good way; like true travellers, keep it, and let none hinder you in your journey to Heaven. Take heed, this morning Sun, that looks out so hopefully, to the joy of all that know and love you, (but not up with foul weather, in the evening of your days. If you were got many miles further on your journey than you are, yet this counsel would not come too late, or be needless. Apostasie is not more incident to our natures, than breaches made on early profession are dangerous. When
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The only daughter
now living of Sir Symonds D'Eves Knight
Baronet.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

V a fair morning afterwards turns to rain, there is less hope of its clearing up, than if it had begun foul. O labour therefore to be more in earnest for God, and Heaven, every day than other. Beware of falling into a consumption in the solid parts of Godliness, which may be, and yet a fresh set colour appear on the face of profession. Borrow as much time as you can for communion with God, and communicating with your own hearts in secret. If such as you can find no time, or spare but little for this work, who then may? Labour to get a greater mastery of your estate, and love of the world, that you may be able to command it for God; ever counting a large heart, a mercy greater than a large purse. Value your selves by your inheritance in the other world, and not by your honour and riches in this: You may (as Saints) call that your own; but this, alas, is only your Masters Cash in your hand, for the disbursement of which, you must account, and that to a penny. Be abundant in the acts of Charity, and let the Papists know, that good works will grow on Protestant ground, where there is no hope of merit allowed to water them. Be not much in that company, that will neither give, nor take any good.

V You will find, Honoured Friends, that Religion is a serious business, and will require your wisest thoughts, and best care to manage it well. There is an unhappy Proverb (which the formal Courtship, rather than cordial friendship, that Religion finds among many great personages, hath occasioned,) viz. A little Religion goes a great way amongst great ones; whereas in all reason, that which may pass for great Religion among inferiours, should be thought little by those that are mounted higher on the Hill of honour; because they owe more service to God, and the Devil owes more spite to them. Their temptations are greater; not only in more danger to fall, but in falling also; because of the height they fall from. The good Lord help you to belye this Proverb more and more, and you may convince the world; greatness and goodness are not so irreconcilable, but may be perswaded to dwell in one house, yea, lye in one bosome. This Discourse, that I here humbly present to your hands (a little fruit of my labours, that grew in your Fathers soil,) If you water it with prayer in the reading of it, may (I hope) through Gods blessing, give encouragement, and also reach some help to you in the work; which that it may do, shall be the prayer of

Your humble servant in the Lord,

Lavenham, Octob. 1657.

William Gurnall.

PART

PART II.

EPHES. 6. 14. [Stand therefore and]

24 Nov 1747

THE Apostle had laid down in general, *ver. 13.* what Armour the Christian Souldier must use, *Armour of God.* Now lest any should stamp divinity upon what is humane, and make bold to set Gods Name on their counterfeit ware, calling that Armour of God, which comes out of their private forge (as Papists, and many carnal Protestants also do, who invent weapons to fight the Devil with, that never came into Gods heart to appoint) He therefore comes more particularly to shew what this whole Armour of God is, describing it piece by piece, which together make up the compleat suit, and every way furnish the Christian to take the Field against this his enemy. We shall handle them

in that order we find them here laid by the Apostle. Only something would briefly be first said to the posture given us in charge, as that which we are to observe in the use of every piece, and therefore prefix to all, because it hath influence into all. The posture lies in these words, *Stand therefore, stand, stand.* This word is the same with the last in the precedent verse; but neither in the same Mood, nor Tense: There put for victory and triumph when the war is done, here for the Christians posture in the fight, and in order to it. It is a military expression, a word of command that Captains use upon different occasions to their Souldiers, and so imports several duties that are required at the Christians hands.

CHAP. I.

wherein is briefly shewed the necessity of resisting Satans temptations, with the danger of yielding to them.

First, *To stand,* is opposed to a cowardly flight from, or treacherous yielding to the enemy. When a Captain sees his men begin to shrink, and perceives some disposition in them to flee or yield, then he bids *stand*, that is, stand manfully to it, and make good your ground against the enemy, by a valiant receiving his charge, and repelling his force. The word taken thus, points at a suitable duty incumbent on the Christian, which takes in this note.

Note. Satan in his temptations is stoutly to be resisted, not in any wise yielded unto.

Reas. 1. The command is express for it, *1 Pet. 5. 9.* *Whom resist steadfast in the faith.* Set your selves in battel against him, as the word imports, fight him when ever he comes. Souldiers must keep close to their Commission, whatever comes on it. When *Joab* sent *Uriah* to stand in the fore-front of the battel, in the face of death it self, he could not but see his danger, yet he disputes not the matter with his General; obey he must, though he loses his life upon the place. Cowardise and disobedience to the Leaders command, are counted among the *Turks*, the most damning sins; and shall they be thought peccadilloes, little ones by us that have Christ for our Captain to serve, and sin and the Devil for enemies to fight? To resist some temptations may cost us dear. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood* (saith the Apostle) *striving against sin*; *Heb. 12. 4.* implying it may come to that, and if it should, it alters not the case, nor gives a dispensation to shift for our selves, by choosing to sin, rather than to suffer. The *Roman* Captain said it was necessary to fail, not to live; and shall a Christian be afraid of his duty, when it is attended with outward hazard? The

Souldier carries his Prince's honour into the Field with him, and so doth the Christian his God's, whenever he is call'd to contest with any temptation: Now it will be seen at what rate he values his honour. *David's* subjects valued him worth ten thousands of their lives, and therefore would die every man of them, rather than hazard him; Oh how unworthy is it then to expose the Name of God to reproach, rather than our selves to a little scorn, temporal loss or trouble? It was *Pompey's* boast, that at a word or nod of his, he could make his Souldiers creep up the steepest Rock on their hands and knees, though they were knockt down as fast as they went up. Truly, God is not prodigal of the blood of his Servants, yet sometimes he tries their loyalty in hard services, and sharp temptations: that he may from their faithfulness to him, and holy stoutness in their sufferings for him, triumph over Satan, who was so impudent as to tell God, that one of his choicest servants did but serve himself in serving of him, *doth Job fear God for nought?* as if when any sharp encounter came, he would turn head, and rather curse God, than submit to him; and therefore we find the Lord glorying over Satan, *Job 2. 2.* *Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him*; as if the Lord had said, what doest think now Satan? hath not *Job* proved thee a loud liar? I have some servants thou leest that will serve me without a bribe, that will hold fast their integrity, when they can hold fast nothing else. Thou hast got away his estate, servants and children, and yet he stands his ground, and thou hast not got thy will of him, nor his integrity from him.

2. God furnisheth us with Armour for this end, that

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that we would stand it out valiantly, and not yield to Satan tempting. To deliver up a Castle into an enemies hand, when 'tis well provided with ammunition to defend it, is shameful and unworthy of such a trust. This makes the Christians sin more dishonourable than anothers, because he is better appointed to make resistance. Take a graceless soul, when solicited (suppose) to a sin that promiseth carnal pleasure or profit, 'tis no great wonder that he yields at first summons, and delivers up himself prisoner to Satan: The poor wretch, alas, hath no Armour on to repel the motion. He tastes no sweetness in Christ; what marvel is it, if his hungry soul for want of better food, falls on board upon the Devils chear? that he, who hath no hope of another world, be made to shark and prole to get some of this? The Goat (we say) must browse where she is tyed, and the sinner feed on earth and earthly things, to which he is staked down by his carnal heart. But the Christian hath a hope in his bosom of another guests glory than this peddling world can send to; yea, a faith that is able to entertain him present with some of heavens joys, it being the nature of that grace to give existence to the good things of the promise; this helmet on, and shield lift up, would keep off a whole shewre of such arrows from hurting a Christian. God hath reason to take it the worse at his hands to yield, that might have stood, would he but have made use of those graces which God hath given him for his defence, or called in help from heaven to his succour. *Hast thou eaten* (saith God to Adam) *of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* Gen. 3. The accent lies in *Thou*. It was not sure for hunger, thou hadst a whole Paradise before thee; hast thou eaten, that wert provided so well to have withstood him? Hast thou, may God say to the Christian, eaten of the Devils dainties who hast a key to go to my cup-board? does thy heavenly Father keep so starv'd a House, that the Devils scraps will go down with thee?

Thirdly, The Christians safety lies in resisting. All the Armour here provided is to defend the Christian fighting, none to secure him flying. Stand, and the day is ours: Flie or yield, and all is lost. Great Captains to make their souldiers more resolute, do sometimes cut off all hope of a safe retreat to them that run away: Thus the Norman Conquerour as soon as his men were set on English shore, sent away his Ships in their sight, that they might resolve to fight or die. God takes away all thought of safety to the Coward. Not a piece to be found for the back in all Gods Armoury. Stand, and the bullets light all on your Armour; Flie, and they enter into your hearts. 'Tis a terrible place, Heb. 10. 38. *The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* He that stands to it believably comes off with his life; but he that recoils, and runs from his colours, as the word *ὑποσπένται* imports, God will have no pleasure in him, except it be in the just execution of his wrath on him. And doth he not make a sad change, that from fighting against Satan, engageth God as an enemy against him? There is comfort in striving

against sin and Satan, though to blood; but none to lie sweating under the fiery indignation of a revenging God. What Satan lays on, God can take off; but who can ease, if God lays on? What man would not rather die in the Field fighting for his Prince, than on a Scaffold by the Ax, for Cowardise or Treachery?

Fourthly, The enemy we have to do withal is such as is only to be dealt with by resisting. God is an enemy that is overcome by yielding, the Devil only by force of Arms.

First, He is a cowardly enemy; though he sets a bold face on it in tempting, he carries a fearful heart in his breast. The work is naught he goes about, and as a Thief is afraid of every light he sees, or noise he hears in the house he would rob; so Satan is discouraged where he finds the soul waking, and in any posture to oppose him. He fears thee (Christian) more than thou needest him. *Jesu I know, and Paul I know,* (saith the Devil) *Act. 19. 15.* That is, I know them to my shame, they have both put me to flight, and if ye were such as they, I should fear you also. Believe it soul, he trembles at thy faith; put it forth in prayer to call for help to heaven against him, and exert it vigorously by rejecting the motions he makes, and thou shalt see him run. Did Souldiers in a Castle know that their enemies besieging them were in a distracted condition; and would certainly upon their falling out, break up, and flie away, what metal and courage would this fill them withal? The Spirit of God, who knows well enough how squares go in the Devils camp) sends this intelligence unto every soul that is beleaguered by his temptations, *1am. 4. 8. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* He cannot hurt us without our leave. The Devil is not so good a drawer, but when he finds it comes not, the soul yields not, his heart then fails him, at least for the present, as in Christs combate, 'tis said, *he departed from him for a season.* When the Devil continues long the same suit, 'tis to be feared, that person though he hath not fully promised him, yet he hath not given him a peremptory denial. He is a suitor that listens for something to drop from the creature that may encourage him to prosecute his motion; no way to be rid of him, but to shut the door upon him, and deny all discourse with him; which prompts to the second Character.

2. He is an encroaching enemy, and therefore to be resisted. *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath,* (saith the Apostle) *neither give place to the Devil,* Eph. 4. 26. as souldiers by cowardly leaving some out-work they are set to defend, give place to their enemy who enters the same, and from thence doth more easily shoot into the City than he could before. Thus yielding in one temptation, we let the Devil into our trench, and give him a fair advantage to do us the more mischief. The angry man while he is raging and raving, thinks, may be, no more but to ease his passion by disgorging it in some bitter keen words; but alas, while his fury and wrath is falling out at the portal of his lips, the Devil finding the door open, enters and hurries him further than he dreamt of. We have not to do with

an *Hannibal*, who though a great Sword-man, yet wanted the Art of following and improving the advantages his victories gave him, but with a cunning Devil, that will easily lose no ground he gets; our best way therefore is to give him no hand-hold, not so much as to come near the door where sin dwells, lest we be hooked in; If we mean not to be burnt, let us not walk upon the coals of temptation; If not to be tann'd, let us not stand where the Sun lyes. They sure forget what an insinuating wrigling nature this Serpent hath, that dare yield to him in something, and make us believe they will not in another; Who will sit in the company of Drunkards, frequent the places where sin is committed, and yet pretend they mean not to be such? That will prostitute their eye to unchaste objects, and yet be chaste? That will lend their ears to any corrupt doctrine of the times, and yet be sound in the faith? This is a strong delusion that such were under. If a man hath not power enough to resist Satan in the less, what reason hath he to think he shall in the greater? Thou hast not grace (it

seems) to keep thee from throwing thy self into the whirl of temptation, and dost thou think, when in it, thou shalt bear up against the stream of it? One would think it is easier, when in the Ship, to keep from falling over-board, than when in the Sea, to get safely into the Ship again.

3. He is an accusing enemy; and truly folly is in that mans name, who knows what a tell-tale the Devil is, and yet will, by yielding to his temptation, put an errand into his mouth, with which he may accuse him to God. Some foolishly report, that Witches cannot hurt, till they receive an alms: But I am sure, so long as thou shewest no kindness to the Devil, he cannot hurt thee, because he cannot accuse thee; take up therefore holy *Jobs* resolution, *Job 27. My righteousnesses I hold fast, my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* It is never sad indeed with the Soul, till the barking is within doors; Conscience (not the Devil) is the blood-hound that pulls down the creature. Oh let not that reproach thee, and thou art well enough.

CHAP. II.

wherein is shewed, what it is for a Christian to stand in order, together with his duty in this particular, and the danger of straglers from their own place.

Secondly, To stand, amounts to as much as to stand every one in his rank and proper station, and is here opposed to all disorder or stragling from our place; When a Captain sees his Souldiers march, or fight out of their rank and order, then he bids stand. Military discipline is so strict in this case, that it allows none to stir from their place without special warrant. It hath cost some their lives for fighting out of their place though with great success. *Marius* killed his own son for no other fault. From hence the Note is,

Note. That it should be the care of every Christian, to stand orderly in the particular place wherein God hath set him. The Devils method is first to rout, and then to ruine. Order supposeth company, one that walks alone cannot go out of his rank. This place therefore and rank wherein the Christian is to stand, relates to some society or company in which he walks. The Christian may be considered relating to a three-fold society, Church, Commonwealth, and Family. In all there are several ranks and places. In the Church, Officers and private Members. In the Commonwealth, Magistrates and People. In the Family, Masters and Servants, Parent and Children; Husband and Wife. The welfare of these Societies consisteth in the order that is kept, when every wheel moves in its place without clashing, when every one contributes by performing the duty of his place to the benefit of the whole society; But more distinctly, then a person stands orderly in his place, when he doth these three things.

First, When he understands the peculiar duty of

his place and relation. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, *Prov. 14. 8.* His way, that is the way which he in particular is to walk. It will not profit a man to know the way to *York*, if going to *London*; yet how prone are we rather to study anothers way and work than our own? The Servant what his Masters duty is, not what his is to his Master. The People what the Minister in his place should do, rather than what is incumbent on themselves to such as are over them in the Lord. It is not knowing anothers duty, no nor censuring the negligence of another, but doing our own will bring us safely and comfortably to our journeys end, and how can we do it, except we know it? *Solomon* in no one thing gave a greater proof of his wisdom, than in asking of God wisdom to enable him for the duty of his place.

Secondly, When knowing the duty of our place, we conscientiously attend to it and lay out our selves for God therein. What *Paul* charged *Timothy* in his place, that every Christian must do in his; he must meditate on these things, and give himself wholly to the discharge of his duty, as a Christian in such a place and calling, *is τὴν ἰδίαν, 1 Tim. 4. 13. be in them,* let thy heart be on thy work, and thou wholly taken up about it. The very power of godliness lyes in this. Religion, if not made practicable in our several places and callings, becomes ridiculous, and vanisheth into an empty notion that is next to nothing. Yet many there are that have nothing to prove themselves Christians, but a naked profession, of whom we may say as they do of the *Cinnamon-tree*, that the bark is more worth than all they

they have besides. Such the Apostle speaks of, *Tir.* 1. 16. *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* What good works the Apostle means, will appear by the next words, *chap.* 2. 1. where in opposition to these he presseth those duties which Christians in their particular places and relations (as becometh holiness) ought to perform. A good Christian, and a disobedient Wife; a godly Man, and an unfaithful Servant, or undutiful Child, is a contradiction that can never be reconciled. He that walks not uprightly in his House, is but an Hypocrite at Church. He that is not a Christian in his Shop, is not in his Closet a Christian, though upon his knees in prayer. Would Religion in one part, and 'tis felt in every part. If it declines one way, it cannot thrive in any other. All that miscarry in Religion, do not the same way miscarry. As it is in the regard of our natural life, some ('tis observ'd) dye upwards, some downwards. In one, the extreme parts; his feet are first dead, and so creeps up to the leggs, and so at last takes hold on the vitals; in another his superior parts are first invaded. Thus in Profession, some, their declining appears first in a negligence of duties about their particular callings, and duties they owe by their place and relation to man, who all this while seem very forward and zealous in the duties of worship to God, much in hearing, praying, and such like: Others falter first in these, and at the same time seem very strict in the other, both destructive alike to the Soul, they both meet in the ruine of the power of godliness. He stands orderly that makes conscience of the whole duty that lyes on him in his place to God or Man.

Thirdly, To stand orderly, it is requisite that we keep the bounds of our place and calling. The *Israelites* were commanded to *pitch every man by his own standard*, *Numb.* 2. 2. The Septuagint translates it, *κατὰ τάγμα*, according to order. God allows no stragglers from their station in his Army of Saints. *As the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk*, *1 Cor.* 7. 17. Our walk must be in that path which our Call beats out. We are therefore commanded every one to *do his own business*, *1 Thes.* 4. 11. That which is the Commanders business in an Army, is not the private Souldiers; the Magistrates, not the Subjects; the Ministers, not the Peoples. That which is Justice in the Ruler, is Murder in another. They are *idua*, our own things, that come within the compass of our general or particular calling; out of these, we are out of our diocess. O what a quiet world should we have, if every thing and person knew his own place! If the Sea kept its own place, we should have no inundations; if Men had theirs, we should neither have seen such floods of sin, nor miseries, as this unhappy age has been almost drowned with. But it must be a strong bank indeed, that can contain our fluid spirits within our own terms. Peter himself was sharply chid, for prying out of a curiosity into that which concern'd him not. *What is that to thee?* *John* 21. 22. as if Christ had said, Peter, Meddle with thy own matters, this concerns not thee; which

sharp rebuke (saith one) might possibly make Peter afterwards give so strict a charge against, and set so black a brand upon this very sin, as you may find, *1 Pet.* 4. 15. where he ranks the busy-body among murderers and thieves.

Now to fix every one in his place, and perswade all to stand orderly there without breaking their rank, these five Considerations (me-thinks) may carry some weight, among those especially, with whom the Word of God in the Scripture yet keeps its authority to conclude and determine their thoughts.

1. Consider, What thou doest out of thy place is not acceptable to God, because thou canst not do it in faith, *without which it's impossible to please God*; and it cannot be in faith, because thou hast no call. God will not thank thee for doing that which he did not set thee about; possibly thou hast good intentions; so had *Uzzah* in staying the Ark, yet how well God liked his zeal, see *2 Sam.* 6. 7. *Sam* himself could make a fair Story of his sacrificing, but that served not his turn. It concerns us, not only to ask our selves, what the thing is we do; but also, who requireth this at our hands? To be sure, God will at last put us upon that question, and it will go ill with us if we cannot shew our Commission. So long we must needs neglect what is our duty, as we are busy about that which is not. The Spouse confesseth this, *Cant.* 1. 6. *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept*, she could not mind theirs and her own too; our own Iron will cool while we are heating anothers. And this must needs be displeasing to God, to leave the work God sets us about, to do that he never commanded. When a Master calls a truantly Scholar to account, that hath been missing some days from School, would this be a good plea for him to tell his Master, that he was all the while in such a mans shop at work with his tools? No sure, his business lay at School, not in that shop.

2. By going out of our proper place and calling, we put our selves from under Gods protection: The promise is, He will keep us in *all our ways*, *Psal.* 91. 11. When we go out of our way, we go from under his wing. We have an excellent place for this, *1 Cor.* 7. 24. *Let every one wherein he is called, therein abide with God.* Mark that phrase, *abide with God.* As we love to walk in Gods company, we must abide in our place and calling; every step from that is a departure from God; and better to stay at home in a mean place, and low calling, wherein we may enjoy Gods sweet presence, than go to Court, and there live without him. 'Tis like you have heard of that holy Bishop, that in a journey fell into an Inn; and by some discourse with the Host, finding him to be an Atheist, or very Atheistical, presently calls for his servant to bring him his horse, saying, He would not lodge there, for God was not in that place. Truly when thou art in any place, or about any work, to which thou art not called, we may safely say, God is not in that place, or enterprise, and what a bold adventure is it to stay there, where you cannot expect his presence to assist, or protect? *As a bird that wandereth from her*

Peter
chid

ber nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place, Prov. 27.8. God took special care, that the bird sitting over her eggs in her nest should not be hurt, Dent. 22. 6. but we find nothing to secure her if found abroad. In doing the duty of our place, we have heavens word for our security ; but upon our own peril be it if we wander; then we are like *Shimei* out of his precincts, and lay our selves open to some judgment or other. It is alike dangerous to do what we are not call'd to, and to neglect or leave undone the duty of our place. As the earth could not bear *Corah's* usurpation of what belong'd not to them, but swallowed them up: So the Sea could not but bear witness against *Jonah* the run-away Prophet, disdaining to waite him, that fled from his place and work that God called him to. Nay heaven it self would not harbour the Angels, when once they left their own place and office that their Maker had appointed, so those words, *Jude* 6. ἀπολίπτουσι τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, I find most probably interpreted. The ruine of many souls breaks in upon them at this door. First they break their ranks, and then they are led further into temptation. *Abraham* first looks over the hedge in his ambitious thoughts, a King he would be ; and this wandering desire beyond his place, lets in those bloody sins, rebellion, incest and murder, and these ripen'd him for, and at last delivered him up in the hand of divine vengeance. The Apostle joyns order and stedfastness together, *Col.* 2. 5. *I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith.* If an army stands in close order, every one in his place attending his duty, content with his work, 'tis impregnable in a manner. How came many in our days, to fall from their stedfastness, but by breaking their order!

3. We shall never be charged for not doing others work, *Give an account of thy stewardship*, *Luke* 16.2. that is, of what by thy place thou wert intrusted with. We may indeed be accessary to anothers sin and miscarriage in his place. *Be not partakers with them*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 5. 7. there is a partnership (if not very watchful) that we may have with others sins, and therefore we may say *Amen* to that holy mans prayer, *Lord forgive me my others sins.* Merchants can trade in bottoms that are not their own, and we may sin with other mens hands, many ways, and one especially is, when we do not lend our brother that assistance in his work and duty, which our place and relation obligeth to. But 'tis not our sin, that we do not supply anothers negligence, by doing that which belongs not to our place. We are to pray for Magistrates that they may rule in the fear of God, but if they do not, we may not step upon the Bench, and do his work for him. God requires no more than faithfulness in our place. We do not find fault with an apple-tree if it be laden with apples (which is the fruit of its own kind) though we can find no figs or grapes growing on it ; we expect these only from their proper root and stock. He is a fruitful tree in Gods Orchard, that brings forth his fruit in his season, *Pf.* 1.3.

4. There is poor comfort in suffering, for do-

ing that which was not the work of our place and calling. Before we launch out into any undertaking, it behoves us to ask our selves, and that seriously, what our tackling is, if a storm should overtake us in our voyage. It is folly to engage in that enterprize, which will not bear us out, and pay the charge of all the loss and trouble it can put us to. Now, no comfort, or countenance from God can be expected in any suffering, except we can entitle him to the business we suffer for. *For thy sake are we killed all the day long*, saith the Church, *Psal.* 44.22. But if suffering finds us out of our calling and place, we cannot say, *for thy sake* we are thus and thus afflicted, but for our own sakes ; and you know the Proverb, *Self-do, self-have.* The Apostle makes a vast difference between suffering as a *busy-body*, and suffering as a *Christian*, *1 Pet.* 4. 15, 16. 'Tis to the latter he saith, *let him not be ashamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf* ; as for the busy body, he mates him with thieves & murderers ; and those, I trow, have reason both to be ashamed and afraid. The Carpenter that gets a cut or wound on his leg from his ax, as he is at work in his calling, may bear it more patiently and comfortably, than one that is wantonly meddling with his tools, and hath nothing to do with such work. When affliction or persecution overtakes the Christian travelling in the way God hath set him in, he may shew the Bible as that *Holy man* (suffering for Christ) did, and say, *This hath made me poor, this hath brought me to prison* ; that is, his faith on the truths, and obedience to the commands in it, and therefore may confidently expect to suffer at Gods cost, as the souldier to be kept and maintained by his Prince in whole service he hath lost his limbs. But the other that runs out of his place, and so meets with sufferings, he hath this to imbitter them, that he can look for nothing from God but to be soundly chid for his pains, as the child is serv'd, that gets some hurt while he is gadding abroad, and when he comes home at night with his batter'd face, meets with a whipping from his father, into the bargain, for being from home. This lay heavy on the spirit of that learned German, *Johannes Funccius*, who of a Minister of the Gospel in his Princes Court, turn'd Minister of State to his Prince ; and was at last for some evil counsel (at least so judg'd) condemned to die. Before he suffered, he much lamented the leaving of his calling, and to warn others left this Distick :

Disce meo exemplo mandato munere fungi,
Et fuge seu pestem τὴν πολυπράγμοσύνην.

To keep thy place and calling learn of me,
Flee as a plague a medler for to be.

5. It is an erratique spirit that usually carries men out of their place and calling. I confess there is an *Heroicus impetus*, an impulse which some of the servants of God have had from heaven, to do things extraordinary, as we read in Scripture of *Moses*, *Gideon*, *Phineas*, and others. But it is dangerous to pretend to the like, and unlawful to expect such immediate commissions from heaven now, when he issueth them out in a more ordinary way, and gives rules for the same in his Word ; we may as well expect

expect to be taught extraordinarily, without using the ordinary means, as to be call'd so. When I see any miraculously gifted, as the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, then I shall think the immediate calling they pretend to is Authentick. To be sure, we find in the Word, extraordinary calling and extraordinary teaching go together. Well, let us see what that erratique spirit is which carries many out of their place and calling. It is not always the same; sometimes it's idleness. First, Men neglect what they should do, and then are easily perswaded to meddle with what they have nothing to do. The *Apostle* intimates this plainly, *1 Tim. 5. 13. They learn to be idle, wandering from house to house, and not only idle, but busy bodies.* An idle person is a gadder; he hath his foot on the threshold, easily drawn from his own place, and as soon into anothers Diocess. He is at leisure for to hear the Devils chat. He that will not serve God in his own place; the Devil, rather than he shall stand out, will send him of his errand, and get him to put his sickle into anothers corn. Secondly, It's pride, and discontent that makes persons go out of their place; some men are in this very unhappy, their spirits are too big and haughty for the place God hath set them in. Their calling may be, is mean and low, but their spirits high and towering, and whereas they should labour to bring their hearts to their condition, they project how they may bring their condition to their proud hearts. They think themselves very unhappy while they are shut up in such strait limits, (indeed the whole World is too narrow a walk for a proud heart, *Astutus infelix angusto limite mundi*; the world was but a little ease to *Alexander*) shall they be hid in a croud, lie in an obscure corner, and dye before they let the world know their worth? No, they cannot brook it, and therefore they must get on the stage, and put forth themselves one way or other. It was not the Priests work that *Corah* and his complices were so in love with, but the Priests honour which attended the work, this they desired to share; and liked not to see others run away with it from them; nor the zeal that *Abolom* had to do justice, which made his teeth water so after his fathers Crown, though this must silver over his ambition. These places of Church and State are such fair flowers, that proud spirits in all ages, have been ambitious to have them set in their own garden; though they never thrive so well as in their proper soil. In a third, 'tis unbelief; this made *Uzzah* stretch forth his hand unadvisedly to stay the Ark that shook, which being not a *Levite*, he was not to touch. See *Numb. 4. 15.* Alas! good man, it was his faith shook more dangerously than the Ark, by fearing the fall of this, he fell to the ground himself. God needs not our sin to shoar up his glory, truth, or Church. Lastly, in some it is mis-informed zeal; many think they may do a thing, because they can do it. They

can preach, and therefore they may; wherefore else have they gifts? certainly the gifts of the Saints need not be lost any of them, though they be not laid out in the Ministers work. The private Christian hath a large field wherein he may be serviceable to his brethren, he need not break the hedge which God hath set, and thereby occasion such disorder as we see to be the consequence of this. We read in the *Jewish Law*, *Exod. 22.* that he who set a hedge on fire, and that fire burnt the corn standing in a field, was to make restitution, though he only fired the hedge, (may be not intending to hurt the corn) and the reason was, because his firing the hedge, was an occasion of the corns being burnt, though he meant it not. I dare not say, that every private Christian who hath in these times taken upon him the Ministers work, did intend to make such a combustion in the Church, as hath been, and still sadly is among us. (God forbid I should think so.) But, O that I could clear them from being accessary to it, in that they have fired the hedge which God hath set between the Ministers calling and Peoples. If we will acknowledge the Ministry a particular office in the Church of Christ, (and this I think the Word will compell us to do,) then we must also confess it is not any ones work, (though never so able) except called to the Office. There are many in a Kingdom to be found, that could do the Princes errand ('tis like) as well as his Embassadour, but none takes the place, but he that is sent, and can shew his letters credential. Those that are not sent and commissioned by Gods call for Ministerial work, they may speak truths as well as they that are; yet of him that acts by virtue of his calling, we may say that he preacheth with authority, and not like those that can shew no commission, but what the opinion themselves have of their own abilities gives them. Dost thou like the Ministers work? why should'st thou not desire the office, that thou mayest do the work acceptably? Thou dost find thy self gifted, as thou thinkest, for the work, but were not the Church more fit to judge so than thy self? and if thou should'st be found so by them appointed for the tryal, who would not give thee the right hand of fellowship? there are not so many labourers in Christs field, but thy help (if able) would be accepted; but as now thou actest, thou bringest thy self into suspicion in the thoughts of sober Christians, as he would justly do, who comes into the field, where his Prince hath an Army, and gives out he comes to do his Sovereign service against the common enemy, yet stands by himself at the head of a Troop he hath got together, and refuseth to take any commission from his Princes Officers, or joyn himself with them: I question whether the service such a one can perform, (should he mean as he says, which is to be feared) would do so much good, as the distraction (which this his carriage might cause in the Army) would do hurt.

CHAP. III.

wherein is contain'd the third and last importance of the word Stand, and the Christians duty of standing on his watch spoken to; why he is to watch, and how he should.

THirdly, To stand, here is opposed to sleep and sloath, standing is a waking, watching posture; when the Captain sees his Souldiers lying secure upon the ground asleep, he bids *Stand to your arms*, that is, stand and watch. In some cases it is death for a Souldier to be found asleep, as when he is appointed to stand Centinel, or the like; now to sleep, deserves death, because he is to wake that the whole army may sleep; and his sleep may cost them their lives; therefore a great Captain thought he gave that Souldier but his due, whom he run through with his sword, because he found him asleep when he should have stood Centinel, excusing his severity with this, that he left him but as he found him; *Mortuum inveni, & mortuum reliqui: I found him dead in sleep, and left him but asleep in death.* Watchfulness is more needful for the Christian Souldier than any other, because other Souldiers fight with men that need sleep as well as themselves; but the Christians grand enemy *Satan*, is ever awake and walking his rounds, seeking whom he may surprize. And if *Satan* be always awake, it is dangerous for the Christian at any time to be spiritually asleep, that is, secure and careless. The Christian is seldom worsted, by this his enemy, but there is either treachery or negligence in the business; either the unregenerate part betrays him, or grace is not wakeful to make a timely discovery of him, so as to prepare for the encounter; the enemy is upon him before he is thoroughly awake to draw his sword. The Saints sleeping time, is *Satan's* tempting time; every *Flie* dares venture to creep on a sleeping *Lion*. No temptation so weak, but is strong enough to foil a Christian, that is napping in security. *Sampson* asleep, and *Dalilah* cuts his Locks. *Saul* asleep, and the Spear is taken away from his very side, and he never the wiser. *Noah* asleep, and his graceless Son has a fit time to discover his Fathers nakedness. *Enichus* asleep, nods, and falls from the third Loft, and is taken up for dead. Thus the Christian asleep in security, may soon be surprized so, as to lose much of his spiritual strength; *The joy of the Lord*, which is *his strength*, be robb'd of his Spear, his Armour, Graces I mean, at least in the present use of them, and his nakedness discovered by graceless men, to the shame of his profession; as, when bloody *Joab* could take notice of *Dauids* vain-glory in numbering the people, was not *Dauids* grace asleep? Yea, he may fall from a high loft of profession, so low, into such scandalous practices; that others may question whether there be any life of grace indeed in him. And therefore it behoves the Christian to stand wakefully; sleep steals as insensibly on the Soul, as it doth on the Body. The wise Virgins fell asleep as well as the foolish, though not so soundly; take heed thou dost not indulge thy self in thy lazy distemper, but stir up thy self to action, as

we bid one that is drowsie, Stand up, or walk. Yield to it by idleness and sloath, and it will grow upon thee; bestir thy self in this duty, and that; and it will over. *David* first awakes his tongue to sing, his hand to play on his Harp, and then *Dauids* heart awakes also, *Psal.* 51. 8. The *Lion* ('tis said) when he first wakes, lashes himself with his tayl, thereby to stir and rouze up his courage, and then away he goes after his prey: We have enough to excite and provoke us to use all the care and diligence possible.

First, The Christians work is too curious to be done well between sleeping and waking, and too important to be done ill, and flubber'd over, no matter how. He had need be awake that walks upon the brim of a deep River, or brow of a steep Hill. The Christians path is so narrow, and the danger is so great, as calls for both a nimble eye to discern, and steady eye to direct, but a sleepy eye can do neither: Look upon any duty or grace, and you will find it lye between *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, two extremes, alike dangerous. Faith, the great work of God, cuts its way between the Mountain of Presumption, and Gulf of Despair; Patience, a grace so necessary, that we cannot be without it a day, except we would be all that while besides our selves. This keeps us that we fall neither into the sleepy Apoplexy of a blockish Stupidity, which deprives the creature of its senses; nor into a raging fit of Discontent, which hath sense enough, and too much, to feel the hand of God, but deprives the man of his reason, that he turns again upon God, and shoots back the Almighty's arrows on his fiery face, in the fury of his froward spirit. The like we might say of the rest. No truth but hath some error next door to her; no duty can be performed without approaching very near the enemies Quarters, who soon takes the Alarm, and comes out to oppose the Christian; and ought he not then to have always his heart on the watch?

Secondly, The trouble of watching is not comparable to the advantage it brings.

First, By this, thou frustratest the designs *Satan* hath upon thee: It is worth watching to keep the house from robbing, much more the heart from rifling by the Devil. *Watch that ye enter not into temptation*, *Matth.* 26. 41. He buys his Sleep dear, that pays his throat-cutting for it; yea, though the wound be not so deep, but may be cured at last. Thy not watching one night, may keep thee awake many a night upon a more comfortable occasion. And hadst thou not better wake with care, to keep thy self from a mischief, than afterward thy eyes be held open (whether thou wilt or not) with pain and anguish of the wound given thee in thy sleep? You know how sadly *David* was bruised, by a fall got in his spiritual slumber (for what

what else was he, when in the eventide he rose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of his house, like a man walking in his sleep? 2 Sam. 11. 2.) and how many restless nights this brought over this holy mans head, you may perceive by his own mournful complaints of this sin, which is the foot and sad burthen of several mournful *Psalms*.

Secondly, By thy watchfulness thou shalt best learn the evil of a sleepy state; one asleep is not sensible of his own snoring, how uncomely and troublesome to others it is, but he that is awake, is apprehensive of both. The man asleep is not sensible, if laid naked by some that would abuse him; but he that is awake, observes, is ashamed, and covers him; thus while thou art in a spiritual sense awake, thou canst not but observe many uncomely passages in the lives of those Professours, who do not watch their hearts, which will fill thy heart with pity to them, to see how they are abused by Satan and their own passions, which like rude servants, take this their own time to play their pranks in, when they have made sure of their Mistresses (Grace I mean, now laid asleep) that should keep them in better rule: Yea, it will make the blood come into thy face for shame to see how by their nakedness, Profession it self is flouted at, by those, that pass by, and see how it is with them; Well, what thou bluntest to see, and pitiest to find in another, take heed it befall not thy self; if thou sufferest a spiritual slumber to grow upon thee, thou wilt be the man thy self that all this may come upon, and what not, besides? Sleep levels all, the wise man then is no wiser than a fool, to project for his safety; nor the strong man better than the weak, to defend himself; if slumber falls once upon thy eye, it is night with thee, and thou art (though the best of Saints) but as other men, so far as this sleep prevails on thee.

Thirdly, By thy watchfulness thou shalt invite such company in unto thee, as will make the time short, and sweet, and that is thy dear Saviour, whose sweet communication & discourse, about the things of thy Fathers Kingdom, will make thou shalt not grudge the ease sleepy Christians get, with the loss of such an heavenly entertainment, as thou enjoyest. Who had not (that loves his Soul better than his Body) rather have *Dauids* songs, than *Dauids* sleep, in the night? And who had not rather have Christs comforting presence with a waking Soul, than his absence with a sleepy sloathful one? 'Tis the watchful Soul that Christ delights to be with, and open his heart unto. We do not choose that for the time of giving our friends a visit, when they are asleep in their beds; nay, if we be with them, and perceive they grow sleepy, we think 'tis time to leave them to their Pillow, and verily Christ doth so too. Christ withdraws from the Spouse, till she be better awake, as a fitter time for her to receive his loves. Put the sweetest Wine into a sleepy mans hand, and you are like to have it all spilt; yea, put a Purse of Gold into his hand, and the man will hardly remember in the morning what you gave him over night. Thus in the sleepy state of a Soul, both the Christian loseth the benefit, and Christ the praise

of his mercy; and therefore Christ will stay to give out his choice favours, when the Soul is more wakeful, that he may both do the creature good, and his creature may speak good of him for it.

Quest. But how must the Christian stand upon his watch?

Ans. First, constantly. The Lamp of God in the Tabernacle was to burn always, *Exod.* 27. 20. and 30. 8. that is, always in the night, which sense is favoured by several other places. And I pray, what is our life in this world but a dark night of temptation? Take heed, Christian, that thy watch-candle go not out in any part of this dark some time, lest thy enemy come upon thee in that hour. He can find thee, but not thou resist him in the dark; if once thy eye be shut in a spiritual slumber, thou art a fair mark for his wrath; and know, thou canst not be long off thy watch, but the Devil will hear on't. The Devil knew the Apostles sleeping time, and then he desires leave to winnow them, *Luke* 22. He saw they were in some disorder, the eye of their Soul began to be heavy; the thief riseth when honest men go to bed. The Devil, I am sure, begins to tempt when Saints cease to watch; when the Staff is thrown away, then the Wolf appears. When the Soul puts her danger furthest off, and lyes most secure, then 'tis nearest; therefore labour to be constant in thy holy care, the want of this spoils all. Some you shall have, that after a great fall into a sin that hath bruised them sorely, will seem very careful for a time where they set their foot, how they walk, and what company they come in, but as soon as the forenews of their consciences wears off, their watch broke up, and they are as careless as ever; like one that is very careful to shut up his shop strongly, and may be sit up late to watch it also, for two or three nights after it hath been rob'd, but then minds it no more. Others in an affliction, or newly come out of the furnace, O how nice and scrupulous are they while the smell of fire is about them, and memory of their distress fresh? They are as tender of sinning, as one that comes out of a hot close room is of the air: they shrink at every breath of temptation stirring; but alas, how soon are they hardened to commit those sins without remorse, the bare motion of which, but a little before, did so trouble and afflict them? *Josephus* in his *Antiq.* tells us, that the Sons of *Noah* for some years after the flood, dwelt on the tops of high mountains, not daring to take up their habitation in the lower ground, for fear of being drown'd by another flood; yet in process of time (seeing no flood came) they ventured down to the Plain of *Shinar*, where their former fear we see ended in one of the boldest, proudest attempts against God, that the Sun was ever witness to; the building, I mean, of a Tower whose top should reach Heaven, *Gen.* 11. 2, 3. They, who at first were so maidenly and fearful, as not to venture down their hills, for fear of drowning, now have a design to secure themselves against all future attempts from the God of Heaven himself. Thus oft we see Gods judgments leave such an impression in mens spirits, that for a while they stand aloof from their sins (as they on their hills) afraid to come down

down to them, but when they see fair weather continue, and no clouds gather towards another storm, then they can descend to their old wicked practices, and grow more bold and heaven-daring than ever. But if thou wilt be a Christian indeed, keep on thy watch still, remit not in thy care, thou hast well run hitherto, O lie not down (like some lazy traveller) by the way side to sleep, but reserve thy resting time till thou gettest home out of all danger. Thy God rested not till the last days work in the Creation was finished; neither do thou cease to wake or work, till thou canst say, thy salvation-work is finished.

Secondly, watch *universally*; First, watch thy *whole man*. The honest watch-man walks the rounds, and compasseth the whole Town. He doth not limit his care to this house or that. So do thou watch over thy whole man. A pore in the body is a door wide enough to let in a disease, if God command; and any one faculty of thy soul, or member of thy body, to let in an enemy that may endanger thy spiritual welfare. Alas, how few set the watch round? Some one faculty is not guarded, or member of the body not regarded. Hethat is scrupulous in one, you shall find him secure in another: May be, thou settest a watch at the door of thy lips, that no impure communication offends the ears of men; but how is the *Lords watch* kept at the Temple door of thy heart? 2 *Chron.* 23. 6. Is not that defiled with lust? Thou (may be) keep thy hand out of thy Neighbours purse, and foot from going on a thievish errand to thy Neighbours house: But does not thy envious heart grutch him what God allows him? when thou prayest, thou art very careful thy outward posture be reverent; but what eye hath thou on thy soul, that it performs its part in the duty? Secondly, watch in *every thing*: If the Apostle bids in *every thing give thanks*, then it behoves us, in *every thing to watch*, that God may not lose his praise, which he doth in most, for want of watching. No action so little (almost) but we may in it do God, or the Devil some service, and therefore none too little for our care to be bestowed on. Hewas a holy man indeed, of whom it was said, *that he ate and drank eternal life*. The meaning is, he kept such holy watch over himself in these things, that he was in Heaven while doing them. There is no creature so little among all Gods works, but his providence watcheth over it, even to a Sparrow, and a Hair. Let there be no word or work of thine, over which thou art not watchful. Thou shalt be judged by them, even to thy idle words and thoughts, and wilt thou not have care of them?

Thirdly, watch *wisely*; which thou shalt do, if thou knowest where thou shouldest keep strictest watch, and that must be first in the weightiest duty of the command; *nothing of Cummin and Anise* must not be neglected, but take heed thou dost not neglect the weightiest things of the *Law, judgement, mercy, and faith, Math.* 23. 23. making your preciousness in the less, a blind for your horrible wickedness in the greater.

Begin at the right end of your work (Christian)

by placing your chief care about those main duties to God and Man, in his Law and Gospel, in his Worship, and in thy daily course, which when thou hast done, neglect not the circumstantial; should a Master before he goes forth, charge his Servant to look to his Child; and trimm his house up handsomely against he comes home; when he returns, will he thank his Servant for sweeping his house, and making it trimm (as he bade him,) if he finds his Child through his negligence fallen into the fire, and by it kill'd or crippled? No sure, he left his Child with him as his chief charge, to which the other should have yielded, if both could not be done. There hath been a great zeal of late among us, about some circumstantial of Worship, but who looks to the little child, the main duties of Christianity I mean? was there ever less Love, Charity, Self-denial, Heavenly-mindedness, or the power of holiness in any of its several walks, than in this sad age of ours? alas, these, like the child, are in great danger of perishing in the fire of contention and division, which a perverse zeal in less things hath kindled among us. Secondly, Be sure thou beest watchful more than ordinary over thy self, in those things where thou findest thy self weakest and hast been ofttest foiled. The weakest part of the City needs the strongest Guard, and in our Bodies the tenderest part is most observ'd, and kept warmest. And I should think it were strange, if thy fabrick of grace stands so strong and even, that thou shouldest not soon perceive which side needs the shoar most, by some inclination of it one way more than another. Thy body is not so firm, but thou findest this humour over-abound, and that part craze faster than another; and so mayest thou in thy soul. Well, take counsel in the thing, and what thou findest weakest, watch most carefully. Is it thy head that is weak, thy judgement I mean? watch thy self, and come not among those that drink no Wine but that which thy weak parts cannot bear (Seraphique notions, and high-flown opinions) and do not think thy self much wrong'd to be forbidden their cup; such strong Wine is more heady than hearty, and they that trade most with it, are not found of the healthiest tempers of their souls, no more than they that live most of strong-water are for their bodies. Is thy impotency in thy passions? Indeed we are weak, as they are strong and violent. Now watch over them, as one that dwells in a thatch house, would do off every spark that flies out of his Chimney, lest it should light on it, and set all on fire. O take heed what speeches come from thy mouth, or from any thou conversest with, this is the little instrument sets the whole course of nature on flame; when our neighbours house is on fire, we cast water on our roof, or cover it with a wet sheet; when the flame breaketh out at anothers mouth, now look thou throwest water on thy own hot spirit; some cooling words quenching Scriptures and Arguments carry with thee for that purpose, and so in any other particular, as thou findest thy weakness.

VERSE 14. *Having your loyns girt about with truth.*

THE Apostle having ordered the *Ephesians*, and in them every Christian, the posture which they are to observe in fight with their enemy; He comes

now to instance in the several pieces of that Armour, which before he had commanded to them only in general. The first of which is the *Girdle of Truth*.

CHAP. I.

wherein is contained a brief Explication of the words.

HAVING your Loyns girt about with truth. A twofold enquiry is here requisite. First, what he means by *Truth*. Secondly, what by *Loyns*, and their being girt with Truth.

First, for the first. What is *Truth* here? Some by *Truth* understand *Christ*, who indeed elsewhere is called the *Truth*; yet in this place I conceive not so properly, because the *Apostle* instanceth here in several pieces and parts of Armour, one distinct from another, and *Christ* cannot so well be said to be a single piece to defend this or that part, as the whole in whom we are compleat, compared therefore, *Rom. 13.* to the whole suit of Armour, *put on the Lord Jesus*, that is, be clothed and harnessed with *Christ*, as a Souldier with his Armour cap-a-pe. Some by *Truth*, mean *truth of doctrine*; others will have it *truth of heart, sincerity*; They I think best, that comprize both. And so I shall handle it; both indeed are required to make the girdle compleat, one will not do without the other. 'Tis possible to find good meanings, and a kind of sincerity without, yea, against the *Truth*. Many follow an error, as they *Abraham*, in the simplicity of their hearts. Such do ill while they mean well. Good intentions do no more make a good action, than a fair mark makes a good shot by an unskilful Archer. God did not like *Saul's* zeal when he persecuted the *Christian Church*, though he thought (no question) he did him good service therein. Neither is it enough to have *Truth* on our side, if we have not truth in our hearts. *John* was a great stickler against idolatry, but kickt down all again by his hypocisie. Both then are necessary; sincerity to propound a right end, and knowledge of the word of *Truth*, to direct us in the right way to that end.

Secondly, What is meant here by *Loyns* that are to be girt with this Girdle? The *Loyns* must be like the girdle. This is spiritual, and therefore they must be so. *Peter* will help to interpret *Paul*, *Gird up the loyns of your minds*, 1 *Pet. 1. 13.* They are our minds and spirits which must wear this girdle, and very fitly may our spirits and minds be compared to the loyns. The loyns are the chief seat of bodily strength. Of *Behemoth* it is said, *Job 40. 6.* *His strength is in his loyns.* The loyns are to the body, as *Carina navi*, the keel to the ship. The whole ship is knit to that, and sustained by it. And the body to the loyns, if the loyns fail, the

whole body sinks; hence to *smite through the loyns*, is a phrase to express destruction and ruine, *Deut. 33. 11.* weak loyns, and a weak man; if we be but a little weary, nature directs us to lay our hands on our loyns to sustain them, as our chief strength: Thus as the actings of our minds and spirits are in their faculties and powers, so we are weak or strong Christians; if the understanding be clear in its apprehensions of truth, and the will sincere, vigorous and fixt in its purposes; for the which is holy and good, then he is a strong Christian. But if the understanding be dark, or uncertain in its notions (as a disordered eye that cannot well discern its object) and the will be wavering and unsteady (like a needle that trembles between two load-stones) not able to bring its thoughts to a issue, which to close with, here the man is weak, and all he doth will be so. Feeble spirits cause an unmitting faltering pulse; so want of strength in the mind, to know truth, and resolution in the will, pursue that which he knows to be holy and good, causeth a man to falter in his course. The one therefore of these two, *truth of doctrine* for the mind, and *sincerity* for the will, is to unite and establish both these faculties, which they do when they are clapt, and girt about the soul, as the girdle about the loyns of the body. Though the loyns be the strength of the body, yet they need an auxiliary, their strength from the Girdle to keep their parts close, and unite their force, without which men, when they would strain themselves, and put forth their strength in any work, find a trembling and looseness in their loyns. Hence the *phrasing* of the loyns, is a phrase to express weakness, *Psal. 23.* Thus our minds and spirits need this Girdle to strengthen them in every work we do, or else we shall act nothing vigorously.

First, We shall begin with *truth of Doctrine*, or truth of the Word, called, the Word of *Truth*, *Eph. 1. 13.* because it is the Word of God, who is God of truth. It behoves every Christian to be well girt with this truth. *Resist the Devil* (saith *Peter*) *standing in the faith*, 1 *Pet. 5. 9.* that is, in the *Truth*, Faith being there put for the object of our faith, which is the *Truth* of God, declared in the Doctrine of the Gospel; this is the *faith* which was once delivered to the Saints, *Jude 3.* that is, the truth delivered to them to be believed and held fast. And of what importance

portance is it to be thus stedfast in the faith, the *Apostle Peter* in the following *verse* of the fore-mentioned place, shews, by his vehement and earnest praying for them, that God would *stablish, strengthen, and settle them*. The heaping of words to the same purpose, implies the great danger they were in, of being unsettled by Satan, and his instruments, and the necessity of their standing firm and unshaken in the faith. Nothing more frequently inculcated than this in the *Epistles*, and the more, because in those blustering times, it was impossible to have kept the faith from being blown from them, without this girdle to hold it fast. Now, as there is a double design Satan hath to rob Christians of truth, so, there is

a twofold girding about with this truth necessary.

First, Satan comes as a *Serpent*, in the persons of false Teachers, and by them labours to put a cheat on us, and cozen us with error for truth. To defend us against this design, it is necessary we be girt with truth in our understanding, that we have an establish'd judgment in the truths of Christ.

Secondly, Satan comes sometimes as a *Lion*, in the persons of *bloody Persecutors*, and labours to scare Christians from the truth with Fire and Faggot. Now to defend us against this, we need have truth girt about us, so that with a holy resolution we may maintain our profession in the face of death and danger. To begin with the first.

CHAP. II.

wherein is shewn, It is the Christians duty to labour for a judgment establish'd in the truth, with the Reasons of it, as also some Application of the point.

IT should be the care of every Christian to get an establish'd judgment in the truth. The *Bereans* are highly commended, for the enquiry they made into the Scripture, to satisfy their judgments concerning the Doctrine *Paul* preach'd. They did not believe hand over head, but their faith was the result of a judgment (upon diligent search) convinced by Scripture-evidence, *Acts* 17. 11. It's said there, *They searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so*. They carried the preachers Doctrine to the written Word, and compar'd it with that; and mark, *verse* 12. *Therefore many believed*; as they did not believe before, so they durst not but believe now. I remember *Tertullian* speaking of some *Hereticks*, their manner of Preaching, faith, *Persuadendo docent, non docenda persuadent*; *They teach by persuading, and not persuade by teaching*: That is, they woo and entice the affections of their Hearers, without convincing of their judgment about what they preach. Indeed it were a hard work for the Adulterer to convince her he would prostitute, that the fact is lawful; No, he goes another way to work; First, by some amorous insinuations he inveigles her affections, and they once bewitch'd, the other is not much questioned, it being easie for the affections, to make the judgment of their party. Well, though error, like a thief, comes thus in at the window; yet truth, like the true owner of the house, delights to enter at the right door of understanding, from thence into the conscience, and so passeth into the will and affections. Indeed, he that hits upon truth, and takes up the profession of it, before he is brought into the acquaintance of its excellency, and heavenly beauty, by his understanding cannot entertain it becoming its heavenly birth and descent; 'tis as a Prince that travels in a disguise, not known, therefore not honour'd. Truth is loved and prized only of those that know it; and not to desire to know it, is to despise it, as much as knowing it, to reject it. It were not hard sure to cheat that man of truth, who

knows not what he hath. Truth and error are all one to the ignorant man, so it hath but the name of truth. *Leah* and *Rachel* were both alike to *Jacob* in the dark. Indeed 'tis said, *In the morning behold it was Leah*, *Gen.* 29. 25. So in the morning when 'tis day in the understanding, then the deceived person will see he hath had a false Bride in his bosom; will cry out, Behold, 'tis an error which I took for a truth. You have, may be, heard of the covetous man, that hugg'd himself in the many bags of Gold he had, but never opened them, or used them; when the thief took away his Gold, and left him his bags full of pebbles in the room, he was as happy as when he had his Gold, for he look'd not of the one or other. And verily an ignorant person is in a manner no better with truth, than error on his side: Both are alike to him, day and night, all one to a blind man.

But to proceed and give some more particular account, why the Christian should endeavour for an establish'd judgment in the truth, I shall content my self with three Reasons. The first taken from the damning nature of false Doctrine; The second from the subtilty of Seducers to draw into false Doctrine; And the third, from the universal influence that an establish'd judgment hath on the whole man, and whole course of a Christian.

First, From the damning nature of false Doctrines. They hunt for the precious life of Souls, as well as any other sin. An impostume in the head, proves oft as deadly, as one in the stomach. A corrupt judgment in foundation-truths, kills as sure as a rotten heart, indeed it proceeds thence. *Jezabels children are threaten'd to be kill'd with death*, *Rev.* 2. 23. and who are her Children, but her Disciples, that drink of her cup of Fornication, and embrace her corrupt Doctrines? But sure this is not believed by some, who, though very strict in their lives, and seem as tender in matter of morality, as *Lot* was of his guests, yet are very loose in their principles and judgments, exposing them (as he

his Daughters) to be defiled with any corrupt Doctrine that comes to their door. They would make us think, that here men played but at small game, and their Souls were not at stake, as in other sins. As if there were not such a question to be ask'd at the great day, What opinions we held, and whether we were sound in the faith? In a word, as if false Doctrines were but an innocent thing, not like the wild Gourd, which brought death into the Prophets pot, 2 King. 4. (turning wholesome food, with which it was mingled, into baneful poison) but rather like Herb-John in the pot, that does neither much good nor hurt. Yea, there be some that speak out, and tell us, a man may be saved in any Religion, so he doth but follow his light; and are not these charitable men? who, because they would have the company as few as may be that are damned, make as many roads to Heaven, as the Scripture tells us there are ways to Hell? Contrary to Christ, who tells us of no other way but by him to life. *I am the way, the truth, and the life, John 14. 6.* Point-blank against Saint John, who tells us but of one Doctrine, and that the Doctrine of Christ; and he that holds not this, to be mark'd out for a lost man, 2 John, ver. 9, 10. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God; And how far I pray is that man off Hell, that hath not God?* He that hath not God before he dyes, the Devil shall have him when he dyes. Well, (Sirs,) the time is coming, yea it hastens (what favour and kindness soever corrupt Doctrine find here at mans hand) wherein the obstinate Heretick shall receive the same Law at Christs hands, with the impenitent Drunkard; you may see them both under the same condemnation, as they stand pinioned together for Hell, Gal. 5. 20, 21. *Tell you now (saith the Apostle) as I have told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And see, I pray you, if you cannot find the Hereticks Name amongst them; Ignorance in Fundamentals is damning, sure then Error in Fundamentals much more. If a Pound weighs down the Scale, there is no doubt then but a Stone weight will do it. If the less sin presseth down to Hell, how can we rationally think that the greater should escape it? Error stands at a farther distance from, yea, a fuller contrariety to Truth, than Ignorance. Error is Ignorance with a dye on it. He that eats little or nothing, must needs dye, much more he that eats rank poison. The Apostle doth not only tell us of pernicious doctrines, and damnable heresies, but he tells us, they bring swift damnation upon those that hold them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. I pray observe what an accent he lays on the damnation that comes by these corrupt Doctrines, he calls it, *swift damnation*. All Rivers find their way at last to the Sea from whence they sprang, but some return with a more swift stream, and get sooner to it than others. Would any make it a shorter Voyage to Hell than ordinary, let him throw himself but into this stream of corrupt Doctrine, and he is not like to be long in going.

Secondly, Because Impostors are so subtil, therefore it behoves the Christian to establish and

strengthen his judgment in the truths of Christ. They are a Generation of men, skilful to destroy the faith of others. There is an *erudita nequitia* in the World, as one calls it, a learned kind of wickedness, that some have to corrupt the minds of men. The Spirit of God sets them out to life, sometimes comparing them to Merchants, who can set a gloss upon their false Ware with fine words, 2 Pet. 2. 3. They are said with *feigned words*, to make Merchandise of Souls. To Hucksters that blend, and dash their wine with water, 2 Cor. 2. 17. To cheating Gamesters, that have a slight of hand to cogg the Die, Ephes. 4. 14. Yea, to Witches themselves, Gal. 3. 1. *Who hath bewitched you?* saith the Apostle; strange things have been done in our days, on those that God has suffered them to practise their sorcery upon, and what counter-charm better than an establish'd judgment? 'Tis observable that in 2 Tim. 3. where the Apostle compares the Seducers of that present age to those Sorcerers, *Jannes & Jambres* that resisted Moses, and shews what kind of persons they were that fell into their snare; *Such as though ever learning, yet never come to the knowledge of the truth*, ver. 7. Then he turns to Timothy, ver. 10. *But thou hast fully known my Doctrine.* As if he had said, I am out of fear for thee, thou art better grounded in the Doctrine of the Apostle, than to be thus cheated of it. Indeed, those whom Seducers lay in wait for, are chiefly weak unsettled ones; for as Solomon saith, *In vain the Net is spread in the sight of any Bird*, Prov. 1. 17. The Devil chose rather to assault Eve, than Adam, as more likely of the two to be catch'd. And ever since he takes the same course, he labours to creep over where the hedge is lowest, and the resistance like to be weakest. Three characters you may observe of those who are most commonly seduced. First, they are call'd, *Simple ones*, Rom. 16. 18. *By good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*, *ἀνασῶν*, such who mean well, but want wisdom to discern those that mean ill, incautious ones, that dare pledge every body, and drink of any ones cup, and never suspect poisoning. Secondly, *Children*, Eph. 4. 14. *Be no more Children, tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine.* Now Children they are very credulous, prone to believe every one that giveth them a parcel of fair words; they think any thing is good, if it be sweet; 'tis not hard to make them eat poison for sugar; they are not swayed by principles of their own, but by others; the child reads, construes, and pearces his lesson as his Master saith, and thinks it therefore right; Thus poor creatures that have little knowledge of the Word themselves, they are easily perswaded this or that way, even as those, of whom they have a good opinion, please to lead them; let the Doctrine be but sweet, and it goes down glib; they, like Isaac, bless their opinions by feeling, not by sight; hence many poor creatures applaud themselves so much of the joy they have found since they were of this judgment, and that way; not being able to try the comfort and sweetness they feel, by the truth of their way from the Word, they are fain to believe the truth of it by their feeling, and so poor creatures they bless

error

error for truth. Thirdly, they are such as are unstable, 2 Pet. 2. 14. *beguiling unstable souls*, such as are not well grounded and principled. The truth they profess hath no Anchor-hold in their understanding, and so they are at the mercy of the wind, soon set a-drift, and carried down the stream of those opinions, which are the favourites of the present time, and are most cryed up, even as the dead Fish with the current of the Tyde.

Thirdly, We are to endeavour after an established judgment in the truth, because of the universal influence it hath into the whole man. First, into the memory, which is helpt much by the understanding. The more weight is laid on the Seal, the deeper impression is made on the Wax. The memory is that faculty which carries the images of things. It holds fast what we receive, and is that Treasury where we lay up what we desire afterward to use and converse with. Now, the more clear and certain our knowledge of any thing is, the deeper it sinks, and surer it is held by the memory. Secondly, into the affections: Truth is as light, the more steady and fixt the glass of the understanding is, through which its beams are darted upon the affections, the sooner they take fire. *Did not our hearts burn* (said the Disciples) *within us, while he opened to us the Scriptures?* Luke 24. 32. They had heard (no doubt) Christ preach much of what then he said before his passion, but never were they so satisfied and confirmed as now, when Scriptures and understanding were opened together, and this made their hearts burn. The Sun in the Firmament sends his influence where he doth not shed his beams, I mean, into the bowels of the Earth; but the Sun of Righteousness imparts his influence only where his light comes, he spreads the beams of truth into the understanding to enlighten that; and while the creature sits under these wings, a kindly heart-quickning heat is begot in its bosom. Hence we find, even when the Spirit is promised as a Comforter, he comes as a Convincer, Joh. 16. 13. he comforts by teaching. And certainly the reason why many poor trembling souls have so little heat of heavenly joy in their hearts, is, because they have so little light to understand the Nature and Tenour of the Gospel-Covenant. The further a soul stands from the light of Truth, the further he must needs be from the heat of Comfort. Thirdly, an established judgment hath a powerful influence into the life and conversation. The Eye directs the Foot, he walks very unsafely that sees not his way; and he uncomfortably, that is not resolved whether right or wrong. That which moves, must rest on something that doth not move; a man could not walk if the Earth turn'd under his feet. Now the principles we have in our understanding, are as it were the ground we go upon in all our actions; if they stagger and reel, much more will our life and practice. 'Tis as impossible for a shaking hand to write a straight line, as an unfixt judgment to have an even Conversation. The Apostle joyns steadfastness and unmoveableness with *abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. And if I mistake not, he means chiefly in that

place, steadfastness of judgment, in that truth of the Resurrection, which some had been shaking; it is not the many Notions we have, but the establishment we have in the truth makes us strong Christians; as he is a strong man whose joynts are well set together and knit, not he who is spun out at length, but not thicken'd suitable to his height. One saith well, Men are what they see and judge; though some do not fill up their light, yet none go beyond it. A truth under dispute in the understanding, is, as I may so say, stop't in the head, it cannot commence in the heart, or become practicable in the life: But when it passeth clearly there, and upon its commendation is embraced in the will and affections, then it is held fast, and hath powerful effects in the conversation. The Gospel (it's said) came to the *Thessalonians* in much assurance, 1 Thess. 1. 5. i. e. evidence of its truth, and see how prevalent and operative it was, *vers. 6. It became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost.* They were assured that the Doctrine was of God; and this carried them merrily through the saddest Afflictions which attended the same.

Use 1. First, To reprove those, that instead of endeavouring to establish their judgments in the truth, make it their great study how to strengthen themselves in their errors. I am perswaded, some men take more pains to furnish themselves with Arguments to defend some one error they have taken up, than they do for the most saving truths in the Bible, yea, they could sooner dye at a stake to defend one error they hold, than all the truths they profess. *Austin* saith of himself when he was a *Manichean*, *Non tu eras, sed error meus erat Deus meus.* *Thou O Lord wert not, but my error was my God.* O 'tis hard to reduce a person deeply engaged in the defence of an error; how oft had the *Pharisees* their mouths stop't by our Saviour? yet few or none reclaim'd. Their spirits were too proud to recant; what! they lay down the Bucklers, come down from *Moses Chair*, and confess what they might have taught the people for an Oracle, is now false? They will rather go on, and brave it out as well as they can, than come back with shame, though the shame was not to be ashamed of their Error, but ashamed to confess it. The *Cynick* answered smartly, who coming out of a Brothel-house, was askt, whether he was not ashamed to be seen coming out of such a naughty House? said no, the shame was to go in, but honesty to come out. O Sirs, 'tis bad enough to fall into an Error, but worse to persist. The first shews thee a weak man, *humanum est errare*; but the other makes thee too like the Devil, who is to this day of the same mind he was at his first fall.

Use 2. Secondly, It proves those who labour to unsettle the judgments of others, to ungird this Belt about Christian loyns. They come with the Devils question in their mouths, *Yea, hath God said?* Are you sure this is a truth? Do not your Ministers deceive you? labouring slyly to breed suspicions, and jealousies in the hearts of Christians towards the truths they have received; such were they

they that troubled the *Galatians*, whom *Paul* with'd cut off for their pains, *Gal. 5. 12.* They laboured to puzzle them, by starting scruples in their minds concerning the Doctrine of the Gospel. This is a cunning way at last to draw them from the faith, and therefore they are called *subverters of the faith of others*, *2 Tim. 2. 14. Tit. 1. 11.* The house must needs be in danger, when the groundfels are loosened; Can you think he means honestly, that undermines the foundation of your house? This they do, that would call in question the grand truths of the Gospel: But this is a small fault in our loose Age, or else so many Seducers would not be suffered (whom I may call spiritual Rogues and Vagrants) to wander like Gypsies up and down, bewitching poor simple Souls to their perdition. O 'tis sad, that he who steals the worth of two or three shillings, should hold up his hand at the Bar for his life, yea, sometimes hang for it; and that those who rob poor Souls of the treasure of saving truths, and subvert the faith of whole families, should be let to lift up their heads with impudence, glorying in their impunity. That blasphemy against God should not bear an Action, where blasphemy against the King is indicted for Treason. It is well that God loves his truth better than men, or else these would escape in both Worlds, but God hath declared himself against them. There is a day, when they who rob Souls of truth, shall be found and condemned as greater Felons, than they who rob houses of gold and silver. See how God lays their Indictment, *Jer. 23. 30. Behold, I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my Word, every one from his Neighbour.* He means the false Prophets that enticed the people from those truths, which the faithful servants of God had delivered to them. There will be none on the Bench to plead the Blasphemer and Seducer's Cause, when God shall sit Judge.

Use 3. Thirdly, This might well chastise the strange fickleness and unsettledness of judgment, which many labour with in this unconstant Age. Truths in many Professours minds, are not as Stars fix'd in the Heavens, but like Meteors, that dance in the Air; they are not as Characters engraven in Marble, but writ in the Dust, which every wind and idle breath of Seducers deface. Many entertain Opinions, as some entertain Suitors, not that they mean to marry them, but cast them off as soon as new ones come. Never was there a more giddy Age than ours. What is said of Fashion-mongers, that some men, should they see their Pictures in that habit which they wore a few years past, would hardly know themselves in their present garb; It is most true in regard of their Opinions; should many that have been great Professours, take a view of their religious Principles a dozen years ago, and compare them with their present, they would be found not the same men. They have so chop'd and chang'd, that they seem to have altered their whole Creed. And 'tis no wonder that so many are for a new Baptism, when they have forsaken their old Faith. Nor that the old which they renounce was false, or the new which they espouse is true; but because they were either ignorant of the truth they first profess'd,

or were insincere in the profession of it; and it is no wonder that the one should upon easie terms part with that, which he first took up upon as weak grounds as now he leaves it; or that the other who did not love, or improve the truth he profess'd, should be given up of God to change it for an error. If the Heathen (who did not glorifie God with the light of Nature they had) were righteously given up to a reprobate injudicious mind, to do that which was inconvenient, and morally absurd; then they who dishonour God with the revealed light of Scripture-truth, much more deserve, that they should be given up to that which is spiritually wicked, even to believe lyes and errors for truth. A heavy Curse, did we rightly judge of it, to wander and wilder in a maze of error, and yet think they are walking in the way of truth.

Quest. But may some say, How is it possible that ordinary Professours should attain to this establish'd judgment in the truth, when we see many of great parts and eminency, much unsettled in their judgments?

Ans. We must distinguish, First, of Persons; Secondly, of Truths, First, of Persons. There are many eminent for parts, whose parts want piety to establish them, and no wonder to see wanton wits unfixt in the truths of God. None sooner topple over into error, than such who have not an honest heart, to a nimble head. The richest soyl without culture most tainted with such weeds. They have been men of unsanctified parts, that have been the leaders in the way of error, though the more simple and weak that are led by them. They are knowing men, which first disgorge and vomit error from their corrupt hearts, and ignorant ones that lick it up. And therefore despair not of an establish'd judgment, so long as thou desirest to have an honest upright heart, and conscientiously usest the means. The promise is on thy side, *Psal. 111. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have they that do his commands.*

Secondly, We must distinguish of Truths, some are Fundamental, others are superstrucory; Now though many eminent for piety, as well as parts, are in the dark concerning some of the superstrucory, and more Circumstantial (because mysteriously laid down in the Word) yet there is a sweet harmony among the godly in Fundamentals. And in those, poor Soul, thou mayest come by a faithful use of means to be establish'd. As for our Bodies, God hath so provided, that things necessary to preserve their life, are more common, and to be had at a cheaper rate, than things for delicacy and state. So also for our Souls. If Bread were as hard to come by as Sweet-meats, or Water as scarce as Wine, the greatest part of men must needs famish; so if truths necessary to salvation, were as hard to be understood, and cleared from the Scriptures, as some others, many poor weak-hearted Christians would certainly perish without a miracle to help them. But the saving truths of the Gospel lye plain, and run clear to all, but those who royle the streams with their own corrupt minds.

C H A P. III.

Some Directions for the establishing the judgment of Professors in the Truth.

Quest. BUT what counsel can you give me towards the establishing of my judgment in the truths of Christ?

Ans. 1. First, Let thy aim be sincere in embracing Truths; a false naughty heart, and an unsound judgment, like Ice and water, are produced mutually by one another. The reason of the fickleness of some mens judgements, proceeds from the guile of their hearts. A stable mind, and a double heart seldom meet. That place speaks full to this, 1 Tim. 1. 5. *The end of the Commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned* (now mark what follows) *vers. 6. from which some have serv'd, (or as it is in the Original) not aiming at, have turn'd aside to vain jangling.* They never aim'd at the power of Holiness in receiving Truth, that by it they might advance in their Love, Faith, and other Graces; and taking a wrong end and aim, no wonder they turn out of the right way. A naughty heart can easily bribe the judgement to vote on its side. This shall be truth now, and no truth a Month hence, if it please. That is truth with many, which serves their interest, they tie their judgements to their party-friends, or preferments, &c. and such men are ready (with that Weather-cock in Queen Maries days) to sing a new song upon any change in their carnal concerns. When Love receives in Truth, it is held fast; but if lust after any worldly interest be the cause, then it may be packt away again, when the turn is serv'd. Annon was soon as sick of Tamar, as ever he was for her. And have we not in our days seen some Truths and Ordinances kickt away with as much scorn and contempt as he did her, and by those that have been sufficiently fond of them, a few years past, but (to be feared) never truly in love with them?

Secondly, Attend on the Ministry of the Word. One great end of its appointment, is to establish us in the truth, Ephes. 4. 11. *He gave some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints.* And mark, vers. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, &c.* He that runs from his guide, will soon be out of his way. It is no small testimony that God hath given to his faithful Ministers in this present age; that few leave them, but the leprosie of error appears soon on their forehead. And in thy waiting on the Ministry of the Word, be sure thou attendest to the Doctrinal part of the Sermon, as well as to the applicatory. The former is necessary to make thee a solid Christian; as the other to make thee a warm Christian: Indeed, hot affections, without solid knowledge, are but like fire in the pan, when the piece is not charg'd. The Levites, Nehem. 8. 7, 8. we find, *gave the sentence of the Law, and caused the people to understand it.* Planting goes before watering, and so should teaching before exhorting.

And the same method people should learn in, that we are to preach in.

Thirdly, Enslave not thy judgement to any person or party. There is a *spiritual suretyship* hath undone many in their judgements and principles; Be not bound to, or for the judgement of any. Weigh Truth, and tell God thou mayest after thy Father: Thou must live by thy own Faith, not anothers. Labour to see Truth with thine own eyes. That building stands weak, which is held up by a shore, or some neighbour-house it leans on, rather than on any foundation of its own; when these go, that will fall to the ground also; let not authority from man, but evidence from the Word conclude thy judgement; that's but a shore, this a foundation. Quote the Scripture rather than men for thy judgement. Not so faith such a learned holy man; but thus faith the holy Scripture, yet take heed of bending this Direction too far the other way; which is done when we condemn the judgement of such, whose piety and learning might command reverence: There is sure a mean to be found betwixt defying men, and deifying them. 'Tis admiring of persons that is the Traytour to Truth, and makes many cry *Hosanna* to Errour, and *crucifie* to Truth. Eusebius out of Josephus tells us of *Herod* (that *Herod* whom we read, Acts 12. to be eaten up of worms) his coming upon the Theatre gorgeously clad, and that while he was making an eloquent Oration to the people, his Silver Robe (which he then wore) did by the reflex of the Sun-beams shining on it, so glister, as dazled the eyes of the spectators; And this (faith he) occasioned some flatterers to cry out, *The voice of God, and not of man.* And truly the glistering vanity which some mens parts and Rhetorick put upon their discourses, does oft so blind the judgements of their admirers, that they are too prone to think all divine they speak, especially if they be such, whom God hath used as instruments for any good to their souls formerly. O 'tis hard then (as he said) *amare hominem humaniter*, to love and esteem man as a man, to reverence such so, as not to be in danger of loving their errors also. Augustine had been a means to convert *Alipius* from one error, and he confesseth, this was an occasion, why he was so easily by him led into another error, no less than *Mamebeisme*; *Alipius* thought he could not pervert him here, that had converted him; call therefore none Father on Earth; despise none, adore none.

Fourthly, Beware of curiosity. He is half gone into error, that vainly covets novelties, and listens after every new-fangle opinion. We read of itching ears, 2 Tim. 4. 3. This itch commonly ends in a scab of error. Tamar lost her chastity by gadding; *castitas mentis est fides incorrupta*, the chastity of the mind is its soundness in the faith. And this they are in danger to lose, who will go into

into all companies, and lend an ear to all Doctrines that are preach'd. First, be a Hearer, and then a Disciple of them. Many indulge themselves so far in this curiosity of conversing with every Sect and Opinion, that at last they turn *Scepricks*, and can settle upon nothing as truth. *Augustine* confelleth of himself, that he had gone through so many errors and delusions of the *Manichees* (which he once cryed up for truths, but afterwards saw them a-bominable errors) that at last he was afraid of truth it self, which he heard *Ambrose* preach. *Ut majus medicum expertus, etiam bono timeat se committere.* As (saith he) one that hath had experience of an unskilful Physician, is at last afraid to put himself in the hands of him that is skilful. O take heed that you who will now hear any thing, come not in the end that you will believe nothing.

Fifthly, *Humbly beg an established judgement of God.* No Travellers lose their way sooner, than they who think they know it so well, as they need not ask it. And no Professors are in danger of being drawn from the truth, as they who lean to their own understandings, and acknowledge not God in their way, by consulting with himself daily. Mark Pride (however it may seem to soar aloft in profession at present) and you shall find it at last laid in the ditch of error or prophaneness, this is the bed God hath made for it, and it must lye there where God hath appointed its lodging. It is very necessary such men should be left to be bewildred, and so put to shame; that when their understanding returns to them, (if God hath such a mercy in store for them) they may with *Nebuchadnezzar*, bless the most High, and acknowledge him at their return, whom they neglected so unworthily at their setting forth. O take heed therefore of Pride, which will soon make thee a stranger at the Throne of Grace. Pride takes little delight in begging: It turns humble praying for truth into a busie stickling and ambitious disputing about truth, there is honour to be got here; and thus many to get victory, have lost truth in the heat of the battel. Lay this deep in thy heart, That God, which gives an eye to see truth, must give a hand to hold it fast when we have it. *Qua habemus ab eo, tenere non possumus sine eo.* Bern. What we have from God, we cannot keep without God; keep therefore thy acquaintance with God, or else Truth will not keep her acquaintance long with thee. God is light, thou art going into the dark, as soon as thou turnest thy back upon him. We stand at better advantage to find truth, and keep it also, when devoutly praying for it, than fiercely wrangling and contending about it; Disputes toyl the Soul, and raise the dust of passion; Prayer sweetly composeth the Mind, and lays the passions which disputes draw forth; and I am sure a man may see further in a still clear day, than in a windy and cloudy. When a person talks much, and rests little, we have great cause to fear his brain will not long hold; and truly, when a person shall be much in talking and disputing about truth, without an humble spirit in prayer to be led into it, God may justly punish that mans pride with a spiritual frenzy in his mind, that he shall not know error from truth.

Sixthly, Look thou takest not offence at the difference of judgements and opinions that are found amongst the Professors of Religion. It is a stone which the Papist throws (in these divided times especially) before our feet. How know you, saith he, which is truth, when there are so many judgements and ways amongst you? Some have so stumbled at this, that they have quit the truth they once profess'd, and by the storm of dissensions in matters of Religion, have been, if not thrown upon the rock of Atheism, yet driven to and fro in a fluctuation of mind, not willing to cast anchor any where in their judgement, till they see this tempest over, and those that are scattered from one another by diversity of judgement, meet together in an unity, and joynt consent of perswasions in matters of Religion. A resolution, as one saith very well, as foolish and pernicious to the Soul, if not more, than it would be to the Body, if a man should vow he would not eat till all the Clocks in the City should strike twelve just together; The latter might sooner be expected than the former.

Seventhly, Rest not till thou feellest the efficacy of every truth thou holdest in thy judgement, upon thy heart; one faculty helps another. The more clear truth is in the understanding, the more abiding in the memory; and the more operative truth is on the will, the more fixed in the judgement. Let a thing be never so excellent, yet if a man can make little or no use thereof, it is little worth to him, and may easily be got from him. Thus many rare Libraries have been parted with by rude Souldiers (into whose hands they have fallen) for little more than their covers were worth, which would be some (that could have improved them) been kept as the richest prize. And verily, it fares with truth according as they are into whose hands it falls; it lights upon one that falls to work with it, and draw out the strength and sweetness of it, this man holds it so much faster in his judgement, by how much more operative it is on his heart: but if it meets with one that finds no Divine efficacy it hath, to humble, comfort, sanctifie him, it may soon be turned out of doors, and put to seek for a new Host; such men for a time dance about that light, which a while after themselves will blow out. When I hear of a man, that once held Original sin, and the universal pollution of mans nature to be a truth, but now denies it, I cannot but fear, he did either never lay it so close to his heart, as to abase and humble him himself for it; or that he grew weary of the work, and by sloath and negligence lost the efficacy of that truth in his heart, before he lost the truth it self in his judgement. I might instance in many other Particulars, wherein Professors in these rowling times have slid from their old principles. Singing of *Psalms* hath been a duty own'd and practised by many, who now have laid it down; and it were a question worth the asking of them, Whether formerly they never enjoyed sweet communion with God in that duty as well as in others? Whether their hearts did not dance and leap up to God with heavenly affections while they sang with their lips? And verily, I should think it strange, to hear a godly person deny this.

Well, if ever thou did'st (Christian) meet with God at this door of the Tabernacle (for I cannot yet think it other,) let me ask thee again, whether thy heart did not grow common, cold, and formal in the duty, before thou durst cast off the duty? (1 *Joh.* 2. 23, 24.) And if so, (which I am very ready to believe:) I desire such in the fear of God to consider these four Questions.

First, Whether they may not fear that they are in an error; and that this darkness is befallen their judgements, as a punishment for their negligence and slowness of spirit in performing the duty, when they did not question the lawfulness of it?

Secondly, Whether it were not better they labour'd to recover the first liveliness of their affections in the duty (which would soon bring them again acquainted with that sweetness and joy they of old found in it) than to cast it off, upon so weak evidence as they who can say most, bring in against it?

Thirdly, Whether such as neglect one duty, are likely to thrive by any other, and keep up the favour of them fresh in their souls?

Fourthly, Whether, if God should suffer them to decline in their affections to any other Ordinance, (which he forbid if it be his will,) it were not as easie for Satan to gather together Arguments enough to make them scruple, and in time cast off that also as well as this? And that there is reason for such a question, these times will tell us; wherein every Ordinance hath had its turn to be questioned, yea, disowned, some by one, some by another; one will not Sing, another will not have his Child Baptized; a third will not have any Water-baptism, nor Supper neither; a fourth bungs up his Ear too from all Hearing of the Word, and would have us expect an immediate Teaching. Thus when once Ordinances and Truths become dead to us through our miscarriage under them, we can be willing (how beautiful soever they were once in our eye) yea, call to have them buried out of our sight. These things sadly laid to heart, will give you reason to think, though this Direction be placed last in order of my Discourse, yet it should not find neither the last nor least place (among all the other named) in your Christian care and practice.

CHAP. IV.

wherein is contained the second way of having our Loyns girt with Truth, viz. so as to make a free and bold Profession of it, and why this is our duty; and a short Exhortation to it.

THE second way that Truth is assaulted, is by force and violence, the Devil pieceth the Foxes skin of Seducers, with the Lyons skin of Persecutors. The bloodiest Tragedies in the World, have been acted on the Stage of the Church; and the most inhumane Massacres and Butcheries committed on the harmless Sheep of Christ. The first man that was slain in the World was a Saint, and he for Religion. And as *Luther* said, *Cain* will kill *Abel* unto the end of the World. The fire of Persecution can never go out quite, so long as there remains a spark of hatred in the wicked's bosome on earth, or a Devil in hell to blow it up. Therefore there is a second way of having Truth girt about the Christians Loyns, as necessary as the other; and that is in the profession of it. Many that could never be beaten from the Truth by dint of Argument, have been forced from it by fire of Persecution. 'Tis not an Orthodox judgement will enable a man to suffer for the truth at the stake; Then that poor *Smith* in our *English Martyrologie*, would not have sent such a dastard-like answer to his friend, ready to suffer for that truth, which he himself had been a means to instruct him in; that indeed it was the truth, but he could not burn. Truth in the head without holy courage, makes a man like the Sword-fish, which *Plutarch* saith, hath μάχαστον αὐτὸν ἵνα γλῶσσαν, a Sword in the head, but no heart to use it. Then a person becomes unconquerable, when from Heaven he is endued with a holy Boldness, to draw forth the Sword of the Spirit, and own the naked truth, by a free Profession of it in the face of death and danger. This, this is to have the Loyns

girt about with Truth. So that the Note from this second kind of girding with Truth, is,

Doct. That it is the Saints duty, and should be their care, not only to get an establish'd judgement in the truth, but also to maintain a steadfast profession of the truth. This the Apostle presseth, *Heb.* 10. 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* He speaks it in opposition to those, who in those hazardous times declin'd the Assemblies of the Saints, for fear of persecution; he calls it a *wavering*: and he that staggers, is next door to Apostasie. We must not spread our sails of profession in a calm, and firlie them up when the wind riseth. *Pergamus* is commended, *Rev.* 2. 13. for her bold profession; *I know thy works; and where thou dwellest, even where Satan hath his Throne; and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antypas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you.* It was a place where Satan sate in the Magistrates seat, where it was *grande satis piaculum mortem mereri, Christianum esse*; matter enough to deserve death to be a Christian; yea, some blood now was shed before their eyes, and even in those days they denyed not the truth. This God took kindly. 'Tis a strict charge *Paul* gives *Timothy*, 1 *Epist.* 6. 11. *But thou O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, &c.* while others are proling for the World, lay about thee for spiritual riches, pursue this with as hot a chase as they do their temporal. But what if this trade cannot be peaceably driven? must shop-windows then be shut up, Profession laid aside, and he stay to be Religious, till more

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favourable times come about? No such matter, *vers. 12.* he bids him fight the good fight of Faith; do not basely quit thy profession, but lay life and all to stake to keep this: And that he might engage him beyond a retreat, see *vers. 13.* I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things; and Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this Commandment: as if he had said, If ever you will see the face of Christ with comfort at the Resurrection, (who chose to lose his life, rather than deny or dissemble the truth) stand to it, and flinch not from your Colours. *Augustine* in his *confess. lib. 8. cap. 2.* hath a notable story of one *Victorinus*, (famous in Rome for Rhetorick which he taught the Senators,) This man in his old age was converted to Christianity, and came to *Simplicianus*, (one eminent at that time for his piety) whispering in his ears softly these words, *Ego sum Christianus, I am a Christian;* But this holy man answered, *Non credo, nec deputabo te inter Christianos nisi in Ecclesia Christi te videro. I will not believe it, nor count thee so, till I see thee among the Christians in the Church;* at which he laughed, saying, *Ergone parietes faciunt Christianum?* Do then those walls make a Christian? cannot I be such, except I openly profess it, and let the World know the same? This he said for fear, being yet but a young Convert, though an old man; but a while after (when he was more confirmed in the Faith, and seriously considered, that if he should continue thus ashamed of Christ, he would be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels) he changed his Note, and came to *Simplicianus*, saying, *Eamus in Ecclesiam, Christianus volo fieri: Let us go to the Church, I will now in earnest be a Christian.* And there, though a private profession of his Faith might have been accepted, chose to do it openly, saying, That he had openly professed Rhetorick, which was not a matter of Salvation, and should he be afraid to own the Word of God in the Congregation of the faithful? God requires both the Religion of the heart and mouth, *Rom. 10. 10. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Confession of the mouth without Faith in the heart, is gross hypocrisie; to pretend Faith without profession of the mouth, is both hypocrisie and cowardize.

Reas. I shall give but one Reason of the Point, and that is taken from the great trust which God puts in his Saints concerning his truth; this is the great depositum which God delivers to his Saints with a strict and solemn charge to keep against all that undermine or oppose it. Some things we trust God with, some things God trusts us with. The great thing which we put into Gods hand to be kept for us, is our Soul, *2 Tim. 1. 12. He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* That which God trusts us chiefly with, is his truth. It is therefore said to be delivered to them, as a charge of money to a friend whom we confide in, *Jude 3. Contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints. To them (saith the Apostle, speaking of the Jews) were committed the Oracles of*

God, *Rom. 3. 2.* They were concredited with that heavenly Treasure. So Paul exhorts *Timothy, Eph. 4. 1. To hold fast the form of sound words;* and this, *vers. 14.* he calls the good thing which was committed to him. If he that is entrusted with the keeping of a Kings Crown and Jewels, ought to look carefully to his charge, that none be lost or stolen; much more the Christian that hath in his charge Gods Crown and Treasure. Rob God of his truth, and what hath he left? The word of truth is that testimony which the great God gives of himself to man. The Saints are his chosen Witnesses above others, whom he calls forth to vouch his truth, by a free and holy profession thereof before men (call'd therefore the Witnesses of God, *Psal. 119. 7. Eney 8. 20. Heb. 12. 1. Rev. 11. 3.*) He that maintains any Error from the Word, bears false Witness against God. He that for fear or shame deserts the truth, or dissembles his profession, he denies God his testimony; and who can expresse what a bloody sin this is, and to what a high contempt of God it amounts? It were a horrid crime though but in a mans case. As when one is falsely accused in a Court, to speak something that might clear the innocency of the man, and yet should suffer him to be condemned, rather than hazard himself a little by speaking the truth in open Court. O, what then is his sin, that when God himself in his truth, stands at sorry man's Bar, dares not speak for God when call'd in to declare himself; but lets truth suffer by an unjust sentence, that himself may not at man's hands for bearing witness to it.

Objeſt. But this may seem too heavy a burden to lay on the Christians back; Must we lay all at stake, and hazard all that is dear to us, rather than deny, or dissemble our profession of the truth? Sure Christ will have but few followers, if he holds his servants to such hard terms.

Anſw. Indeed 'tis hard to flesh and blood; one of the highest stiles to be gone over in our way to Heaven; a carnal heart cannot hear this, but he is offended presently, *Math. 13. 21.* Therefore such as are loth to lose Heaven, and yet unwilling to venture thus much for it, have set their wits a-work to find out an easier way thither. Hence those Hereticks of old, *Priscillianists*, and others (whose chief Religion was to save their own skin) made little of outward profession. They thought they might say, and unsay; swear, and forswear (according to their wretched principle, *Juro, perjuro, mentem injuriam gero;*) so in their heart they did but cleave to the truth. O what fools were the *Prophets, Apostles*, and other holy *Martyrs*, that have seal'd to the truth with their blood, if there might have been such a fair way of escaping the storm of Persecution? Bold men, that to save a little trouble from man, for truth's sake, durst invent such detestable blasphemies against the truth; yea, deface those Characters which nature it self engraves upon the Conscience. The same Window that let in the light of a Deity, would with it let in this also, that we should walk in the Name of this God; the very *Heaven* know this. All people will walk, every one in the Name of his God, *Micah 4. Socrates* to blood

blood held, there was but one God; and in his *Apology* for his life, said, *If they would give him his life, on condition to keep this truth to himself, and not teach it to others, he would not accept it*; Behold here the powerful workings of a natural Conscience! Have not they then improv'd the knowledge of the Scripture well, in the mean time, that are so far out-shot from Nature's weak Bow? Religion would soon vanish into an empty nothing, if for fear of every one we meet, we must (like run-away Souldiers) pluck off our Colours, and put our profession as it were in our Pockets, lest we should be known to whom we belong. What doth God require by a free profession of his truth, more than a Master doth of his Servant, when he bids him take his Livery, and follow him in the streets? Or when a Prince calls his Subjects into the Field, to declare their Loyalty, by owning his quarrel against an invading Enemy? And is it reasonable, what man requires of these, and only hard from Gods hands? Nay, 'tis not more, not so much as we desire of God for our selves. Who would not have God make profession of his love to us, and bear witness for us against Satan, and our own sins, at that great day when Men and Angels shall be spectators? And shall we expect that from God, which he owes us by no Law, but of his own free promise, and deny him that which we are under so many Bonds to pay? If it be but in some affliction (while we are here) how disconsolate are we, if Gods face be a little overcast, and he doth not own us in our distress? And is there no kindness to be shewn to that God that knows your Soul in adversity? When his truth is in an agony, may not Christ look, that all his Friends should sit up and watch with it? O! it were shame with a witness, that any such effeminate delicacy should be found among Christs Servants, that they cannot break a little of their worldly rest and enjoyments, to attend on him and his truth.

Use. Let this stir us up to get the Girdle of truth close girt to us, that we may be able to hold fast the profession of it, even in the face of death and danger, and not be offended when persecution arise. Blessed be God, 'tis not yet come to that, we have the truth at a cheaper rate; but how soon

the Market may rise, we know not. Truth is not always to be had at the same price. Buy it we must at any, but sell it upon no terms. And let me tell you, there hath, is, and will be a spirit of persecution in the hearts of the wicked, to the end of the World; And as Satan was considering *Job*, before he laid his foul hands on him, so now persecution is working in the spirits of the ungodly; there are Engines of death continually preparing in the thoughts and desires of Satan and his Instruments, against the sincere Professors of the truth; 'tis already resolv'd upon what they would do, might power be given, and opportunity, to put their malice in execution; yea, we are half way already towards a persecution. Satan comes first with a spirit of error, and then of persecution; he first corrupts mens minds with error, and then enrageth their hearts with wrath against the Professors of truth. It is impossible that Error, being a Brat of Hell, should be peaceable, it would not then be like its Father. That which is from beneath, can neither be pure nor peaceable. And how far God hath suffered this sulphurous spirit of error to prevail, is so notorious, that no Apology is broad enough to cover the nakedness of these unhappy times. It is therefore high time to have our Girdle of truth on, yea, close girt about us in the profession of it. Not every one that now applauds truth will follow it, when once it comes to shew them the way to Prison; not every one that preacheth for it, or disputes for it, will suffer for it. Arguments are harmless things, blunt weapons, they fetch no blood; but when we suffer, then we are called to try it with Truths enemies at sharps. This requires something more than a nimble tongue, a sharp wit, and a logical head: Where then will be the wise, the disputer, the men of parts and gifts? Alas, they will (like cowardly Souldiers) be wanting in the Fight, though they could be as forward as the best at a Muster, or Training, when no Enemy was in the Field; when to appear for truth, was rather a matter of gain and applause, than loss and hazard. No, God hath chosen the foolish to confound the wise in this piece of service; the humble Christian by his faith, patience, and love to the truth, to shame men of high parts, and no grace.

CHAP. V.

A Direction or two for the girding of Truth close to us in the profession of it.

Quest. BUT how may a Soul get to be thus girt with truth in the profession of it?

Ans. First, Labour to get an heart enflamed with a sincere Love to the truth, this is only able to match the Enemies of truth. The worst they can do is Bonds or Death, and *Love is stronger than Death*, it kills the very heart of Death it self, it makes all easie. Commandments are not grievous to Love, nor doth it complain of sufferings. With what a light heart did *Jacob*, for the love of *Rachel*, endure the

heat of the day, and cold of the night? 'Tis venturous; *Jonathan* threw a Kingdom at his heels, and conflicted with the anger of an enraged Father, for *David's* sake; Love never thinks it self a loser, so long as it keeps its Beloved; yea, 'tis ambitious of any hazardous enterprize, whereby it may sacrifice it self in the service of its Beloved, as we see in *David*, who put his life in his hands for *Michal*; how much more, when our love is pitch'd upon so transcendent an object as Christ and his truth! Alas, they

are but faint spirits, which are breath'd from a Creature, weak beams that are shot from such sorry beauties. If these lay their Lovers under such a Law, that they cannot but obey, though with the greatest peril and hazard; what constraint then must a Soul ravish'd with the love of Christ be under? This has made the Saints leap out of their Estates, Relations; yea, out of their Bodies with joy, counting it not their loss to part with them, but to keep them with the least prejudice to the truth. *Rev. 12.*

11. It's said there, *They loved not their lives unto the death.* Mark, not to the loss of some of the comforts of their lives, but to death; Life it self they counted an Enemy, when it would part them and truth. As a man doth not love his Arm or Leg, when it hazards the rest, but bids, Cut it off. Cannot we live (say these noble spirits) but to the clouding of truth, and calling our love to it and Christ into question? Welcome then the worst of deaths. This kept up *David's* courage when his life was laid for, *Psal. 119. 95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me, but I will consider thy Testimonies.* A carnal heart would have considered his Estate, Wife and Children, or at least his Life now in danger; but *David's* heart, was on a better subject, he considered the Testimonies of God, and so much sweetness pours in upon his Soul, while he is rowling them in his meditation, that he cannot hold. *O how I love thy Law, ver. 97.* This made him set light by all the troubles he met with for his cleaving to the truth. It is a great mystery to the World, that men for an Opinion (as they call it) should run such desperate hazard. Therefore *Paul* was thought by his judge, to be out of his wits. And that question

Pilate which *Pilate* ask'd Christ, seems rather to be slightly, than seriously spoken, *John 18.* Our Saviour had told him, *ver. 27.* that the end why he was born, and came into the World, was, that he should bear witness to the truth. Then *Pilate*, verse 38. asks Christ, *What is truth?* and presently flings away, as if he had said, Is this now a time to think of truth, when thy life is in danger? What is truth, that thou should'st venture so much for it? But a gracious Soul may better ask in a holy scorn, What are Riches and Honours? What the fading Pleasures of this cheating World? Yea, What is Life it self, that any, or all these, should be set in opposition to Truth? O Sirs, look what has your Love, that will command Purse, Credit, Life, and all. *Amor meus pondus meum,* Every man goes where his love carries him. If the World has your love, on it you will spend your lives; if truth has your hearts, you will catch the blow that is made at it in your own breasts, rather than let it fall on it. Only be careful that your love to truth be sincere, or else it will leave you at the Prison door, and make you part with truth, when you should most appear for it. Three sorts of Pretenders to truth, their love is not like to endure the fiery trial.

First, Such as embrace truth for carnal advantage. Sometimes truth pays well for her board in the Worlds own coyn, and so long every one will invite her to his house. These do not love truth, but the jewel at her ear. Many were observ'd in *Hen. 8.*

this time, to be very zealous against Abbies, that lov'd their Lands, more than they hated their Idolatry. Truth finds few that love her gratis. And those few only will suffer with truth, and for it; as for the other, when the worldly dowry that truth brought, is once spent, you will find they are weary of their match. This Kitchen fire burns no longer than such gross fewel of Profit, Credit, and the like, does feed it. If you cannot love naked truth, you will not fadge to go naked for truth. If you cannot love disgraced truth, you will not endure to be disgraced for truth; and what usage truth finds, that her followers must expect.

Secondly, Such who commend truth, and cry it up highly; but if you mark them, they do but complement with it, all this while they keep at a distance, and do not suffer truth to come within them, so as to give Law unto them. Like one that entertains a Suitor, speaks well of him, holds discourse with him, but will not hear of marrying him. It is one thing φιλεῖν, another καταγαγεῖν. *Buccherus* would oft say, *Multi osculantur Christum, pauci vero amant; Many kiss Christ, but few love him.* True love to Christ is conjugal; when a Soul delivers up it self from an inward liking it hath to Christ, as to her Husband, to be ruled by his Spirit, and ordered by his Word of truth, here is a Soul loves Christ and his truth; but where truth has no Command, and bears no Rule, there dwells no love to truth in that heart. She that is not obedient, cannot be a loving Wife, because love would constrain her to be so, and so would love in the Soul enforce obedience to the truth it loves. Nay, he that doth not obey truth, is so far from loving it, that he is afraid of truth; and he that is slavishly afraid of truth, will sooner prove a Persecutor of truth, than a sufferer for truth. So true is that of *Hierome*, *Quem metuit quis odit, quem odit perisse cupit;* Whom we fear, we hate; whom we hate, we wish they were destroyed. *Saul* fear'd *David*, and that made him industriously seek his ruine. *Herod* fear'd *John*, and that cost him his life; Slavish fear makes the naughty heart imprison truth in his conscience, because if that had its liberty and authority in the Soul, it would imprison, yea, execute every lust that now rules the roist; and he that imprisons truth in his own bosome, will hardly lye in Prison himself as a witness for truth.

Thirdly, Such as have no zeal against truths Enemies. Love goes ever arm'd with zeal, this is her Dagger she draws against all the opposers of truth. *Qui non zelat, non amat;* He that is not zealous, doth not love. Now right zeal acts (like fire) ad ultimum sui posse, to its utmost power (yet ever keeping its place and sphere.) If it be confined to the breast of a private Christian, whence it may not flame forth in punishing truths Enemies, then it burns inwardly the more (for being pent up) and preys (like a fire in his bones) upon the Christians own spirits, consuming them; yea, eating him up for grief, to see truth trod under foot of error or prophaneness, and he not able to help it up. 'Tis no joy to a zealous Lover to out-live his Beloved; such there have been, who could have chose rather

to have leap'd into their Friends Grave, and lain down with them in the dust, than here pass a disconsolate life without them. *Let us go and dye with him*, said Thomas, when Christ told them, *Lazarus* was dead; and I am sure zealous lovers of truth count it as melancholy living in evil times, when that is fallen in the streets. The news of the *Arks* taking frighted good *Eli's* Soul out of his Body; and this may charitably be thought to have given life to *Elijah's* wish, yea, solemn prayer for death, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. *It is enough, take away my life*; the holy man saw how things went among the great ones of those wicked times; Idolaters they were Courted, and the faithful Servants of God Carted, (as I may so say) yea, Killed; and now this zealous Prophet thinks it a good time to leave the world in, rather than live in torment any longer, to see the Name, Truth, and Servants of God trampled on, by those who should have shewn most kindness to them. But if Zeal hath any power put into her hands, wherein she may vindicate truths cause (as when she is exalted into the *Magistrate's* Seat) then truths Enemies shall know and feel, that *She bears not the Sword in vain*. The zealous *Magistrate* will have, as an Arm to relieve and defend truth, the *Israelite*; so a Hand to smite blasphemy, error and prophaneness, the *Egyptian*, when any of them assault her. O how *Moses* laid about him (that meek man, who stood so mute in his own cause, *Numb.* 12.) when the people had committed Idolatry! his heart was so inflamed within him, that (as well as he loved them) he could neither open his mouth in a Prayer for them to God, nor his ear to receive any Petition from them, till he had given vent to his zeal in an act of justice upon the Offenders. Now such, and such only, are the persons that are likely (when called) to suffer for the truth, who will not let it suffer if they can help it. But as for natural *Gallio*-like spirits, that can see truth and error scuffling, and not do their utmost to relieve truth, by interposing their power and authority, if a *Magistrate*; by preaching the one up, and the other down, if a Minister; and by a free testimony to, fervent prayer for, and affectionate sympathizing with truth (as it fares ill or well) if a private Christian; I say, as for such, who stand in this case (as some Spectators about two Wrestlers) not caring much who hath the fall; these are not the men that can be expected to expose themselves to much suffering for truth. That *Magistrate*, who hath not zeal enough to stop the mouths of truths Enemies when he may; will he open his mouth in a free profession of it when death and danger face him? That *Minister*, who hath neither love nor courage enough to apologize for truth in the *Pulpit*; can it be thought he would stand to her defence at a *stake*? In a word, That *private Christian*, whose heart is not wounded through truths sides, so as to sympathize with it; will he interpose himself betwixt truth and the blow that bloody Persecutors make at it, and choose to receive it into his own body (though to death) rather than it should light on truth? If the fire of love within be out, or so little, that it will not melt the man into sorrow for the

wrongs done to truth by men of corrupt minds, where will the flame be found, that should enable him to burn to ashes, under the hand of bloody men? He'll never endure the fire in his Body, that hath no more care to keep that sacred fire burning in his Soul; if he cannot shed tears, much less will he blood for Truth.

Quest. If any now should ask, How they may get their hearts enflamed with this heavenly fire of love to truth? I answer, First,

Answ. 1. Labour for an inward conformity of thy heart to truth. Likeness is the ground of love: A carnal heart cannot like truth, because it is not like to truth. Such a one may love truth, as he did *Alexander*, *Regem non Alexandrum*; *The King, not the Person that was King*. Truth in its honour and dignity, when it can prefer him, but not naked truth itself. How is it possible, an earthly Soul should love truth that is heavenly? An unholy heart, truth that is pure? O 'tis sad indeed, when mens Tenets and Principles in their understandings do clash, and fight with the Principles of their hearts and affections; when men have Orthodox judgements, and Heterodox hearts! There must needs be little love to truth, because the judgement and will are so unequally yoked. Truth in the conscience reproving and threatening lust in the heart, and that again controlling truth in the conscience. Thus like a scolding couple, they may a while dwell together, but taking no content in one another, the wretch is easily persuaded to give Truth a Bill of Divorce at last, and send her away (as *Abashmorus* did *Vashti*) that he may espouse other Principles, which will suit better with his corrupt heart, and not cross him in the way he is in. This, this I am persuaded hath parted many and truth in these licentious days. They could not sin peaceably while they kept their judgements sound; Truth ever and anon would be chiding them, and therefore to match their judgements with their hearts, they have taken up principles suitable to their lusts. But Soul, if truth had such a power upon thee, to transform thee (by the renewing of thy mind) into its own likeness; that as the scion turns the stock into its own nature, so truth hath assimilated thee, and made thee bear fruit like it self; thou art the person that will never part with truth; before thou canst do this, thou must part with that new nature, which by it the Spirit of God hath begot in thee. There is now such a near union betwixt thee and truth, or rather thee and Christ, as can never be broke. We see what a mighty power there goes along with Gods Ordinance of Marriage, that two persons, who possibly a Month before never knew one another; yet their affections once knit by love, and their persons made one by Marriage, they can now leave Friends and Parents for to enjoy each other; such a mighty power, and much greater, goes along with this mystical Marriage between the Soul and Christ, the Soul and Truth; that the same person, who before conversion, would not have ventured the loss of a penny for Christ, or his truth; yet now (knit to Christ and his truth by a secret work of the Spirit, new forming him into the likeness thereof) he can bid adieu to the World, Life,

and

and all for these. As that *Martyr* told him, that askt whether he did not love his Wife and Children, and was not loth to part with them? *Yes*, saith he, *I love them so dearly, that I would not part with any of them for all that the Duke of Brunswick is worth*, (whose Subject he was) *But for Christs sake and his truth, farewell to them all.*

Secondly, Labour to get thy heart more and more infired with the love of God, and this will work in thee a dear love to his truth: Love observes what is precious and dear to its beloved, and loves it for his sake. *David's* love to *Jonathan* made him enquire for some of his Race, that he might shew kindness to for his sake. Love to God will make the soul inquisitive to find out what is near and dear to God, that by shewing kindness to it, he may expresse his love to him. Now upon a little search, we shall find that the great God sets a very high price upon the head of truth, *Psal.* 138. 2. *Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* That is Gods Name by which he is known, every Creature hath God's Name upon it; by it God is known, even to the least pile of Grasse; but to his word and truth therein written, he hath given preheminance above all other things that bear his Name. Take a few considerations whereby we may a little conceive of the high value God sets of truth. First, God when he vouchsafeth his word and truth to a people, he makes account he gives them one of the greatest mercies they can receive, or he give; he calls them *the great things of his Law*, *Hos.* 8. 12. A people that enjoy his truth, they are by Christs own judgement *lift up to Heaven*; whatever a people have at Gods hands, without this, bears no more comparison with it, than *Hagar's* loaf of bread and bottle (which was *Ishmael's* portion) would with *Isaac's* inheritance. God that knows how to prize, and rate his own gifts, faith of his Word which he sheweth to *Jacob*, and testimonies that he gives to *Israel*, that *He hath not dealt so with any Nation*, *Psal.* 147. 20. That is, not so richly and graciously. Secondly, Consider Gods especial care to preserve his truth; whatever is lost, God looks to his truth. In shipwracks at Sea, and scale-fires at Land, when men can save but little, they use to choose not lumber, and things of no worth, but what they esteem most precious. In all the great revolutions, changes, and overturning of Kingdoms, and Churches also, God hath still preserv'd his truth. Thousands of Saints lives have been taken away, but that which the Devil spights more than all the Saints; yea, which alone he spights them for (that is the truth) this lives, and shall to triumph over his malice; and sure if truth were not very dear to God, he would not be at this cost to keep it with the blood of his Saints; yea, which is more, the blood of his Son; whose Errand into the World was by life and death to bear witness to the truth, *Joh.* 18. 37. In a word, in that great and final conflagration of Heaven and Earth, when the Elements shall melt for heat, and the World come to its fatal period, then truth shall not suffer the least loss, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, 1 *Pet.* 1. last verse. Thirdly,

Consider the severity of God to the Enemies of truth. A dreadful Curse is denounced against those that shall take away from it, or add the least to it, that embase, or clip this heavenly Coyn, *Rev.* 22. 18. The one pulls upon him all the plagues that are written in the Word of truth; from the other shall be taken away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy City, and from the things (that is, the good things of the promises) which are written in this Book. All these speak at what a high Rate God values truth; and no wonder, if we consider what truth is (that truth which shines forth from the written word:) It is the extract of Gods thoughts and counsels which from everlasting he took up, and had in his heart to effect. Nothing comes to pass but as an accomplishment of this his Word; it is the most full and perfect representation that God himself could give of his own being, and nature to the sons of men; that by it we might know him, and love him. Great Princes use to send their Pictures by their Embassadors, to those whom they wooe for Marriage. God is such an infinite perfection, that no hand can draw him forth to life but his own, and this he hath done exactly in his Word, from which all his Saints have come to be enamoured with him. As we deal with truth, so we do with God himself; he that despiseth that, despiseth him. He that abandons the truth of God, renounceth the God of truth: Though men cannot come to pull God out of his Throne, and un-God him, yet they come as near this as it is possible, when they let out their wrath against the truth, in this they do, as it were, execute God in effigie. There is reason we see, why God should so highly prize his truth, and that we that love him should cleave to it.

Thirdly, Be much in the meditation of the transcendent excellency of truth, *The eye affects the heart*; this is the window at which love enters. Never any that had a spiritual eye to see truth in her native beauty, but had a heart to love her. This was the way that *David's* heart was ravish'd with the love of the Word of truth, *Psal.* 119. 96. *O how I love thy Law, it is my meditation all the day*; while his thoughts were on it, his love was drawn to it; *David* found a great difference betwixt meditating on the truths of Gods Word, and others excellencies which the World cries up so highly; when he goes to entertain himself with the thoughts of some perfection in the Creature, he finds it but a jejune, dry subject compar'd with this; he soon tumbles over the book of the Worlds excellencies, and can find no notion that deserves any long stay upon it, *I have seen*, saith he, *an end of all perfections*; he is at the worlds end presently, and in a few thoughts can see to the bottom of all the Worlds glory; but when he takes up the truths of God into his thoughts, now he meets with work enough for his admiration, and sweet meditation; *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad*; great Ships cannot sail in narrow Rivers, and shallow waters; neither can minds truly great with the knowledge of God and Heaven, find room enough in the Creature to turn, and expatiate themselves in. A gracious Soul

Soul is soon a-ground, and at a stand, when upon these flats; and let it launch out into the meditation of God, his Word, the mysterious truths of the Gospel, and he finds a place of broad waters, sea-room enough to lose himself in. I might here shew you the excellency of Divine truths from many Heads, as from the source and spring-head whence they flow, the God of truth; from their opposite, that mis-shapen Monster, *Error*, &c. But I shall only direct your meditation to a few *enamouring properties* which you shall find in these truths; you may meet a heap of them together in *Psal. 19. 7.* and so on. *Truth* it is pure, this made *David* love it, *Psal. 119. 146.* It is not only pure, but makes the Soul pure and holy that embraceth it. *Sanctifie them through thy truth, thy Word is truth,* *Joh. 17. 17.* It is the pure water that God washeth foul Souls clean with, *Ezek. 36. 25.* *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness will I cleanse you;* foul puddle water will as soon make the face, as *Error* make the Soul clean. *Truth* is sure, and hath a firm bottom, *Psal. 19. 7.* We may lay the whole weight of our Souls upon it, and yet not crack under us; cleave to truth, and it will stick to thee. It will go with thee to prison, banishment, yea, stake it self, and bear thy charges wherever thou goest upon her Errand. *Not one thing, saith Joshua, hath fail'd of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath fail'd thereof,* *Josh. 24. 14.* Whatever you find there promis'd, count it money in your purse; *Four-score years, said Polycarp, I have served God, and found him a good Master.* But when men think by forsaking the truth to provide well for themselves, they are sure to meet with disappointments. Many have been flatter'd from truth with goodly promises, and then serv'd no better than *Judas* was by the *Jews*, after he had betray'd his Master into their bloody hands, *look thee to that.* Though persecutors love the Treason, yet they hate the Traytor; yea oft (to shew their devilish malice) they, when some have been got to wound their Conscience by denying the truth, have most cruelly butchered them, and glory'd in it, as a full revenge to destroy Soul and Body together. *Again truth is free,* and makes the Soul free that cleaves to it, *Joh. 8. 32.* *The truth shall make you free.* Christ tells the *Jews* of a bondage they were in (which that bragge-people never dream't on) *vers. 44.* *Ye are of your father the Devil, and his lusts you will do;* such slaves are all sinners, they must do what the Devil will have them, and dare no more displease him, than a Child his Father with a Rod in his hand. Some Witches have confess'd, that they have been forced to send out their *imps* to do mischief to others, that they might have ease themselves; for till they did send them abroad upon such an errand, they were themselves tormented by them. And he who hath a lust sucking on him, finds as little rest, if he be not always serving of it, and making provision for it: Can the World, think you, shew such another slave as this poor wretch is? Well, though all the bolts that the Devil hath (lusts I

mean) were lockt upon one sinner, and he shut up in the closest Dungeon of all his prison, yet let but this poor slave begin to be acquainted with the truth of Christ, so as to open his heart to it, and close with it; You shall soon hear that the foundations of the prison are shaken, its doors thrown open, and the chains fallen off the poor creatures legs: Truth cannot it self be bound, nor will it dwell in a Soul that lies bound in sins prison; and therefore when once truth and the Soul are agreed, or rather Christ and the Soul, who are brought together by truth, then the poor creature may lift up his Head with joy, for his Redemption and Joy-delivery from his spiritual bondage draws nigh; yea, the day is come, the key is in the lock already to let him out. It's impossible we should be acquainted with truth (as it is in Jesus) and be meer strangers to this liberty that attends it, *Ephes. 4. 19, 20, 21.* In a word, Lastly, *Truth is victorious.* 'Tis great, and shall prevail at last. 'Tis the great counsel of God, and though many fine plots and devices are found in the hearts of men (which shew what they would do) yet the counsel of the Lord shall stand; all their Eggs are addle, when they have sat longest on them; alas, they want power to hatch what their malice sits brooding on. Sometimes, I confess, the Enemies to *Truth* get the *Militia* of this lower World into their hands, and then truth seems to go to the ground, and those that witness to it are even slain; yet then 'tis more than their Persecutors can do, to get them laid under ground in their Grave, *Revel. 11. 9.* Some (that were never thought on) shall strike in on truths side, and forbid the burial. Persecutors need not be at cost for Marble to write the memorial of their Victories, in dust will serve well enough, for they are not like to last so long. *Three days and a half* the Witnesses may lie dead in the streets, and Truth sit disconsolate by them; but within a while they are walking, and truth triumphing again. If Persecutors could kill their Successors, then their work might be thought to stand strong, needing not to fear another to pull down what they set up; and yet then their work would lie as open to Heaven, and might be as easily hindred, as theirs at *Babel.* Who loves not to be on the winning side? choose truth for thy side, and thou hast it. News may come that truth is sick, but never that it is dead. No, 'tis *Error* is short-liv'd; a lying tongue is but for a moment; but truth's Age runs parallel with God's Eternity. It shall live to see their Heads laid in the dust, and to walk over their Graves, that were so busie to make one for her. Live, did I say? yea, Reign in peace with those who now are willing to suffer with, and for it. And wouldst thou not (Christian) be one among that goodly Train of Victors, who shall attend on Christ's Triumphant Chariot into the Heavenly City, there to take the Crown, and sit down in thy Throne with those that have kept the Field, when Christ and his truth were Militant here on Earth? Thus wouldst thou but in thy thoughts wipe away tears and blood, which now cover the face of suffering truth, and present it to thy eye, as it shall look in glory,

glory, thou couldest not but cleave to it with a love stronger than death.

But Secondly, If yet there remains any qualm of fear on thy heart from the wrath of bloody men threatening thee for thy profession of the truth, then to a heart enflamed with the love of truth, labour to add a heart filled with the fear of that wrath, which God hath in store for all that Apostatize from the truth. When you chance to burn your finger, you hold it to the fire, which being a greater fire, draws out the other. Thus when thy thoughts are scorch'd, and thy heart scared with the fire of mans wrath, hold them a while to Hell fire, which God hath prepared for the fearful, *Revel. 21. 8.* and all that run away from Truths colours, *Heb. 10. 39.* and thou wilt lose the sense of the one for fear of the other; *Ignosce Imperator* (said the holy man) *tu Carcerem, Deus Gehennam minatur*; Pardon me, O Em-

perour, if I obey not thy command; thou threatenest a Prison, but God a Hell. Observable is that of *David*, *Psalm 119. 161.* *Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy Word*; He had no cause to fear them, that had no cause to persecute him; one threatening out of the Word (that sets the point of Gods wrath to his heart) scares him more, than the worst that the greatest on earth can do to him. Mans wrath (alas) when hottest, is but a temperate Climate, to the wrath of the living God. They who have felt both, have testified as much. Mans wrath cannot hinder the access of Gods love to the Creature which hath made the Saints sing in the fire, in spite of their enemies teeth. But the Creature under Gods wrath, is like one shut up in a close Oven, no crevice open to let any of the heat out, or any refreshing in to him.

CHAP. VI.

Of the second kind of Truth, Truth of heart, or Sincerity, with the kinds of it; and in particular, of moral uprightness, together with its deficiency; and a double Caution about this; the one to the Saints, the other to the morally upright person.

WE come now to the second kind of Truth, (commended to the Christian, under the notion of the Souldiers Girdle) and that is *Truth of heart*. Where it would be known, First, What I mean by truth of heart. Secondly, Why compared to a Girdle. For the

First, By *truth of heart*, I understand *sincerity*, so taken in Scripture, *Heb. 10. 22.* *Let us draw near with a true heart*, that is, with a sincere heart. We have them oft conjoyn'd, the one explaining the other, *Josh. 24. 14.* *Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth.* *1 Cor. 5. 8.* we read of the *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*. Hypocrisie is a lie with a fair cover over it; an insincere heart is a false heart; the inward frame and motion of the heart, comports not with the profession and behaviour of the outward man; like a Clock, whose wheels within go not as the hand points without.

Secondly, Sincerity, or truth of heart, may fitly be compared to a Girdle, in regard of the twofold use and end, for which a Girdle (especially the Souldiers belt) is worn.

First, The Girdle is used as an Ornament put on uppermost, to cover the joints of the Armour, which would (if seen) cause some uncomeliness. Here (at the loyns I mean) those pieces of armour for the defence of the lower parts of the body, are fastened to the upper; now because they cannot be so closely knit and clasp'd, but there will be some little gaping betwixt piece and piece, therefore they used to put over those parts a broad Girdle, that covered all that uncomeliness. Now Sincerity doth the same for the Christian, what the Girdle doth for the Souldier. The Saints graces are not so close, nor his life so exact, but in the best there are found infirmities and defects, which are as so many gapings

and clefts in his armour; but sincerity covers all, that he is neither put to shame for them, nor exposed to danger by them.

Secondly, The Girdle was used for Strength; by this the loyns were staid and united, and the Souldier made stronger to fight or march; as a Girdment, the closer it sits, the warmer it is; so the Belt, the closer it is girt, the more strength the loyns feel; hence God threatening to enfeeble and weaken a person or people, faith, *Their loyns shall be loosed*, *Esay 45. 1.* *I will loose the loyns of Kings*, and *Ju 12. 21.* *He weakeneth the strength of the mighty*, *Heb. 12. 21.* *He looseth the girdle of the strong*.

Now Sincerity may well be compared in this respect to the Souldiers Girdle. It is a grace that doth gird the Soul with strength, and makes it mighty to do or suffer. Indeed it is the very strength of every grace; so much hypocrisie as is found cleaving to our graces, so much weakness. 'Tis sincere faith, that is the strong faith. Sincere love, that is the mighty love. Hypocrisie is to grace, as the Worm is to the Oak, the Rust to the Iron, it weakens them, because it corrupts them. The Metaphor thus opened, affords these two Doctrinal Conclusions, in handling of which, I shall comprize what I have to say further of this piece of Armour.

Doct. 1. That Sincerity, or truth of heart in our ways, covers all the Christians uncomeliness.

Doct. 2. That truth of heart, or Sincerity, is of excellent use to strengthen the Christian in his whole course.

Doct. 1. To begin with the first, Sincerity covers all our uncomelinesses. In handling of this Point, this is our method.

First, To enquire which is the truth and sincerity that doth this.

Secondly,

Secondly, We shall enquire what uncomelinesses they are that sincerity covers.

Thirdly, How sincerity covers them.

Fourthly, Why sincerity doth this, or some account given for all this.

First, of the first; Let us enquire which is that truth and sincerity that covers all uncomelinesses and deficiencies in the Christian. Here we must distinguish of a two-fold sincerity; one Moral, another Evangelical.

First, There is a moral truth and uprightness, which we may call a Field-flower, because it may be found growing in the wild and waste of Nature. It cannot be denied, but one that hath not a drachm of sanctifying saving Grace, may shew some kind of uprightness and truth in his actions. God himself comes in as a witness for *Abimelech*, that what he did in taking *Sarah*, was in the uprightness of his heart, Gen. 20. 6. *I know (saith God) that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; that is, thou didst mean honestly, as to this particular business, and didst not intend any wrong to Abraham, whose Wife she was, unknown to thee. Joab, though a bloody man, yet dealt very uprightly and squarely with David concerning the rendition of Rabbah, when he had a fair advantage of stealing away the honour from his Prince to himself. Many such instances may be given of men that have been great strangers to a work of Grace on their hearts; but this is not the uprightness that we mean in the point laid down. It doth indeed render a person very lovely and amiable before men, to be thus upright and honest in his dealings; but methinks I hear the Lord saying concerning such, as once he did to Samuel of Eliab, 1 Sam. 16. 7. Look not on their countenance, so as to think these are they which he accepts; No, he hath refused them, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth. Gods eye looks deeper than mans. There are two great defects in this uprightness, which God rejects it for.*

First, It grows not from a good root, a renewed Heart. This is a hair on the moral mans pen, which blurs and blots his copy, when he writes fairest. It is like the leprosie of *Naaman*; that same, but he was a Leper, took away the honour of his greatness at Court, and prowls in the field; so here it stains the fairest actions of a meer moral man, But he is a Christless graceless person. The uprightness of such does others more good in this World, than themselves in another. They are by this moral honesty profitable to those that have civil commerce with them; but it doth not render themselves acceptable to God. Indeed, had not God left some authority in conscience to awe and keep them (that have no grace) within some bounds of honesty, this World would have been no more habitable for the Saints, than the Forest of wild beasts is now for man. And such is the uprightness of men void of sanctifying grace, they are rather rid by an over-pow'ring light of conscience that scares them; than sweetly led by any inward principle enclining them to take complacency in that which is good. *Abimelech* himself, for whom (as we heard) God so apologized, yet is let to know, that his

honesty in that matter, came rather from Gods restraint upon him, than any real goodness in him, Gen. 20. *I also with-held thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.*

Secondly, This moral uprightness falls short of the chief end indispensably necessary to make a person upright indeed. This is the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* The Archer may lose his game by shooting short, as well as shooting wide. The gross Hypocrite shoots wide, the uprightest Moralist shoots short. He may and oft doth take his aim right, as to the particular and immediate end of his action, but ever fails in regard of the ultimate end. Thus, a Servant may be faithful to his Master, scorn to wrong him of a farthing, yea, cordially seek his Masters profit, and yet God not looked at, or thought of in all this, and so all worth nothing, because God is left out of the story, who is principally to be regarded, Ephes. 6. 7. Servants are commanded to do their service as to God, not to man, that is, not only, not chiefly to man. 'Tis true, the Master is not to be lookt at in the Servants duty, but in his way, only as it leads to the glory of God; he must not when he hath desired to please his earthly Master, sit down as at his journeys end, but pass on (as the eye doth, through the air and clouds to the Sun where it is terminated) so he to God, as the chief end; why he is dutiful and faithful to man. Now no principle can lead the soul so high, as to aim at God, but that which comes from God. See both these excellently coucht together, Phil. 1. 10, 11. *That ye may be sincere, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.* Where you may observe, *First*, That the sincerity of the right stamp, is that which brings forth fruits of righteousness to the praise of God, that is, where the glory of God is the end of all our actions. *Secondly*, That such fruit cannot be born, but by Christ; the soul must be planted into Christ, before it can be thus sincere, to bear fruits of righteousness to the praise of God. Hence these fruits of righteousness are said to be by Jesus Christ. What men do by themselves, they do for themselves: They eat their own fruit, devour the praise of what they do; the Christian only that doth all by Christ, doth all for Christ; he hath his sap from Christ, (into whom he is grafted) that makes him fruitful, and therefore he reserves all the fruit he bears for him. Thus we see how this moral uprightness is it self fundamentally defective, and therefore cannot be that Girdle which hides and covers our other defects: Yet before I pass on to the other, I would leave a two-fold Caution for improvement of what hath been said concerning this uprightness: The one is to the sincere Christian, the other is to such as have no more than a moral uprightness.

Caution 1. to the sincere Christian. May there be found a kind of uprightness among men that are carnal and destitute of God's sanctifying grace? O then look you to it, in whose heart dwells the Spirit of Grace, that you be not put to shame by those that are graceless, which you must needs be

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when you are taken tarty in those things, that they cannot be charged for. Many among them there are that scorn to lye; shall a Saint be taken in an untruth? Their moral Principles bind them over to the Peace, and will not suffer them to wrong their Neighbour; and can cheating, over-reaching oppression follow a Saints hand? Except your righteousness exceeds their best, you are not Christians, and can you let them exceed you in those things, which, when they are done, leave them short of Christ and Heaven? 'Tis time for the Scholar to throw off his Gown, and disclaim the name of an *Academick*, when every School-boy is able to dunc and pose him. And for him also to lay aside his profession, and let the World know what he is, (yea, what he never was) that can let a meer civil man, with his weak Bow, only back'd with moral Principles, out-shoot him that pretends to Christ and his grace. I confess, it sometimes so falls out, that a Saint under a temptation, may be out-stript by one that is carnal in a particular case: As a *Lackey* that is an excellent Foot-man, may (from some prick, or present lameness in his foot) be left behind, by one, that at another time should not be able to come near him; We have too many sorrowful examples of moral mens out-stripping even a Saint, at a time, when under a temptation; a notable passage we meet with concerning *Abimelech* his speech to *Sarah* (after her dissembling and equivocating speech, that *Abraham* was her Brother) Gen. 23. 16. And unto *Sarah* he said, (that is, *Abimelech* said to her) Behold, I have given thy Brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other. Now mark the words which follow. Thus she was reprov'd. How? Where lyes the reproof? Here are none but good words, and money to boot also. He promiseth protection to her and *Abraham*; none should wrong him in wronging her; and tells her what he had freely given *Abraham*. Well, for all this, we shall find a sharp reproof, though lapt up in these sweet words, and silvered over with his thousand pieces. First, She was reprov'd by the uprightness of *Abimelech* in that business, wherein she had sinfully dissembled. That he who was a stranger to the true God and his Worship, should be so square and honest, as to deliver her up untoucht, when once he knew her to be another mans Wife; and not only so, but instead of falling into a passion of anger, and taking up thoughts of revenge against them, for putting this cheat upon him, (which having them under his power, had not been strange from a Prince to have done;) for him to forget all this, and rather shew such kindness and high bounty to them, this must needs send a sharp reproof home to *Sarah's* heart, especially considering, that he a Heathen did all this; and she (one call'd to the knowledge of God, in Covenant with God, and the Wife of a Prophet) was so poor spirited, as for fear of a danger, which only her Husband (and that without any great ground) surmised, to commit two sins at one clap, dissemble, and also hazard the loss of her chastity; (the least of which was worse, than the thing they

were so afraid of;) these things, I say, laid together, amounted to such a reproof, as no doubt made her and *Abraham* too, heartily ashamed before God and man. Again, *Abimelech* in calling *Abraham* her Brother (not her Husband) did give her a smart rebuke, putting her in mind, how with that word he had been deceived by them. Thus godly *Sarah* was reprov'd by a prophane King. O Christians, take heed of putting words into the mouths of wicked men to reprove you withal; they cannot reprove you, but they reproach God: Christ is put to shame with you and by you; for the good names sake of Christ, which cannot but be dearer to you (if Saints) than your lives, look to your walking, and especially your civil converse with the men of the World; They know not what you do in your Closet, care not what you are in the Congregation, they judge you by what you are, when they have to do with you. As they find you in your Shop, Bargains, Promises, and such like, so they think of you and your profession. Labour therefore for this uprightness to man; by this you may win some, and judge others. Better vex the wicked World with strict walking, as *Lot* did the *Sodomites*, than let them on work to mock, and reproach thee and thy profession by any scandal, as *David* did by his fall. They that will not follow the light of thy holiness, will soon spy the thief in the Candle, and point at it.

Caution 2. The second word of Caution, is to those that are morally upright, and no more. Take heed this uprightness proves not a snare to thee, and keeps thee from getting Evangelical uprightness. I am sure it was so to the young man in the Gospel. In all likelihood he might have been better, had he not been so good. His honesty and moral uprightness was his undoing, or rather his conceit of them, to castle himself in them. Better he had been a *Pharisee*, driven to Christ in the sense of his sin, than a *Pharisee*, kept from him with an opinion of his integrity. These, these are the weeds, with which many (thinking to save themselves by) keep themselves under water to their perdition. There is more hope of a fool, *Solomon* tells us, than of one wise in his own conceit; and of the greatest sinner, than of one conceited of his righteousness. If once the disease take the brain, the cure must needs be the more difficult; No offering Christ to one in this frenzy. Art thou one kept from these unrighteous ways where in others walk? May be thou art honest and upright in thy course, and scornest to be found false in any of thy dealings. Bless God for it, but take heed of blessing thy self in it; there's the danger, this is one way of being righteous over-much; a dangerous pit, of which *Solomon* warns all that travel in Heaven road, *Ecclesl.* 7. 16. There is undoing in this over-doing, as well as in any under-doing. For so it follows in the same Verse, Why shouldst thou destroy thy self? Thou art not (proud man) so fair for Heaven, as thou flatterest thy self. A man upon the top of one Hill, may seem very high to the top of another, and yet can never come there, except he comes down from that where he is. The mount of thy civil righteousness, and moral uprightness

Abimelech's reproof to Sarah

ness (on which thou standest so confidently) seems perhaps level in thy proud eye to God's holy hill in Heaven, yea, so nigh, that thou thinkest to step over from one to the other with ease. But let me tell thee, it is too great a stride for thee to take; thy safer way and nearer, were to come down from thy mountain of self-confidence, (where Satan hath set thee on a design to break thy neck) and to go the ordinary road, in which all that ever got Heaven went; and that is by labouring to get an interest in Christ and his righteousness, which is provided on purpose for the creature to wrap up his

naked soul in, and to place his Faith on; and thus thy uprightness (which before was but of the same form with the Heathens moral honesty) may commence, or rather be baptized Christian, and become Evangelical grace: But let me tell thee this before I dismiss thee, that thou canst not lay hold of Christs righteousness, till thou hast let fall the lye (thy own righteousness) which hitherto thou hast held so fast in thy right hand. When Christ called the blind man to him, Mark 10. 50. it's said, *he casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus*; do thou so, and then come and welcome.

CHAP. VII.

Of Evangelical or godly Sincerity, what it is, and what uncomelinesses this Girdle covers, and also how it covers them.

WE proceed to the second kind of Truth, or uprightness, which I called an Evangelical uprightness. This is a plant found growing only in Christs Garden, or the enclosure of a gracious Soul. It is by way of distinction from that I called Moral, known by the name of a *godly sincerity*, or the sincerity of God, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the World.* Now in two respects this Evangelical sincerity may be called godly sincerity. First, Because it is of God. Secondly, Because it aims at God, and ends in God.

SECT. I.

First, It is of God. It is his creature, begot in the heart by his Spirit alone. Paul in the place fore-mentioned, 2 Cor. 1. 12. doth excellently derive its pedigree for us. What he calls walking in *godly sincerity* in the first part of the verse, he calls, *having our conversation by the grace of God* in the latter part; yea, opposeth it to *walking with fleshly wisdom in the world*, (the great wheel in the moral mans clock;) and what doth all this amount to but to shew that this sincerity is a babe of grace, and calls none on earth Father. But this is not all, this godly sincerity is not only of divine extraction (for so are common gifts that are supernatural, the Hypocrites boon as well as the Saints;) but it is part of the new creature, which his sanctifying Spirit forms and works in the elect, and none belides. It is a Covenant-grace, Ezek. 11. 19. *I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you.* That *one heart* is this godly sincere heart opposed to the *double heart*, or a heart and a heart, by which the Hypocrite is so often descryed in the Word.

Secondly, It aims at God, and ends in God. The highest project and most ultimate end that a Soul, thus sincere is big with, is, how it may please God. The disappointments such a godly sincere person meets with from any other, troubles him no more, than it would a Merchant, who speeds in the main

end of his voyage to the Indies, and returns richly laden with the prize of Gold and Silver he went for, but only loseth his garter or shoe-string in the voyage. As the Masters eye directs the Servants hand, (if he can do his business to his Masters mind, he hath his wish; though strangers, who come into the shop, like it not.) Thus godly sincerity acquiesceth in the Lords judgement of him. Such a one shoots not at small nor great, studies not to accommodate himself to any, to hit the humour of rich or poor, but singles out God in his thoughts from all other, as the chief object of his love, fear, faith, joy, &c. he directs all his endeavours like a wise Archer at this white, and when he can most approve himself to God, he counts he shoots best. Hear holy Paul speaking, not only his own private thoughts, but the common sense of all sincere believers, 2 Cor. 5. 9. *We labour, whether present or absent, that we may be accepted of him.* The Worlds true man, is he that will not wrong man: Though many go thus far, who can make bold with God for all their demure carriage to man. Some that would not steal the worth of a penny from their neighbour, yet play the notorious thieves with God in greater matters, than all the money their neighbour hath is worth. They can steal that time from God, (to gratifie their own occasions) which he hath enclosed for himself, and lays peculiar claim to (the Sabbath-day I mean) by such a title as will upon tryal be found stronger (I trow) than we can shew for the rest of the week to be ours. Others will not lye to man possibly in their dealing with him, (and it were better living in the World, if there were more of this truth among us) but these very men (many of them, yea all, that are not more than morally upright) make nothing of lying to God, which they do in every prayer they make, promising to do what they never bestow a serious thought how they may perform: they say they will sanctifie Gods Name, and yet throw dirt in the face of every Attribute in it; they pray that the Will of God may be done, and yet while they know their Sanctification is his Will, they content themselves with their unholy hearts and

natures, and think it enough to beautifie the front of their lives, that part which faceth man, and stands to the street (as I may so say) with a few flourish of civility and justness in their worldly dealings, though their inward man lyes all in woful ruines at the same time. But he is Gods true man, that desires to give unto God the things that are Gods, as well as unto man the things that are mans; yea, who is first true to God, and then to man for his sake. Good *Joseph*, when his Brethren feared, as strangers to him (for yet they knew no other) they should receive some hard measure at his hands; mark, what course he takes to free their troubled thoughts from all suspicion of any unrighteous dealing from him. *Do this* (saith he) *and live, for I fear God*, Gen. 42. 18. As if he had said, Expect nothing from me, but what is square and upright, for I fear God; You possibly think, because I am a great man, and you poor strangers (where you have no friends to intercede for you) that my might should bear down your right, but you may save your selves the trouble of such jealous thoughts concerning me, for I see one infinitely more above me, than I seem to be above you, and him I fear, which I could not do, if I should be false to you. The word, 2 Cor. 1. 12. for Sincerity, is emphatical, *ἀληκεια*, a Metaphor from things tryed by the light of the Sun, as when you are buying Cloth (or such like Ware) you will carry it out of the dark Shop, and hold it up to the light, by which the least hole in it is discovered; or as the *Eagle* (say some) holds up her young against the Sun, and judgeth them her own, if able to look up wisely against it, or spurious, if not able. Truly, that is the godly sincere Soul, which looks up to Heaven, and desires to be determined in his thoughts, judgement, affections and practices, as they can stand before the light, which shines from thence through the Word, the great Luminary into which God hath gathered all light for guiding Souls, as the Sun in the Firmament is for directing our Bodies in their walking to and fro in the World. If these suit with the Word, and can look on it, without being put to shame by it, then on the sincere Soul goes in his enterprize with courage, nothing shall stop him: But if any of these be found to shun the light of the Word (as *Adam* would (if he could) the feeling of God) not being able to stand to its tryal, then he is at his journeys end, and can be drawn forth by no arguments from the flesh; for it goes not on the fleshes errand, but on Gods; and he that sends him, shall only stay him. Things are true or right, as they agree with their first Principles. When the Counterpane agrees with the Original Writing, then 'tis true; when a Measure agrees with the Legal Standard or Town-Bushel, then 'tis true: Now the Will of God is Standard to all our wills, and he is the sincere man, that labours to take the rule and measure of all his affections and actions from that. Hence *David* is called a man after Gods own heart, which is but a Periphrasis of his sincerity, and is as much as if the Spirit of God had said, he was an upright man, he carries on his heart the Sculpture and Image of Gods heart, as it is engraved on the Seal of the Word.

But enough for the present; this may serve to shew what is Evangelical uprightness. Three things would be desired further, before we fall on the Application.

First, To shew what uncomelinesses they are that Sincerity covers.

Secondly, How Sincerity covers these.

Thirdly, Why this Evangelical Sincerity doth cover these. We shall give some account to all.

SECT. II.

Quest. 1. Of the first, What uncomelinesses doth Sincerity cover?

Ans. I answer, All, especially sinful. There are several external temporal Priviledges, in which, if any fall short (such excellency does this vain World put in them, more than their intrinsecal worth calls for) they are exposed to some dishonour (if not contempt) in the thoughts of others. Now where sincere grace is, it affords a fair cover to them all; yea, puts more abundant honour on the Person in the sight of God, Angels (and Men also, if wise) than the other can occasion contempt.

First, Beauty, this is the great Idol, which the whole World wenders after, as they after the *Beast*, Rev. 13. which if God denyes (and confines the Souls of some to a more uncomely House (Body I mean) than others) this their mean bodily presence prejudiceth them in the esteem of others: Now Grace, if it be but graced with Sincerity, shines through the cloud that Nature hath darkened the countenance withal, Eccles. 8. 1. *Wisdom makes the face to shine*; Who, that hath the use of his reason, would not prize, and choose the Vessel in the Cellar full of generous Wine, before a gilt Tin that hangs up empty at the door for a Sign? If sincere Grace fills not the heart within, the beauty which Nature hath gilt the face without, makes the person but little worth. A beautiful person without true grace, is but a fair stinking weed; you know the best of such a one, if you look on him further off; whereas a sincere heart without this outward beauty to commend it, is like some sweet flower (not painted with such fine colours on the leaves) better in the hand than eye, to smell on, than look on; the nearer you come to the sincere Soul, the better you find him. Outward uncomeliness to true grace, is but as some old mean buildings you sometimes see stand before a goodly stately house, which hide its glory only from the traveller that passeth by at some distance; but he that comes in, sees its beauty, and admires it.

Secondly, Again, A mean Parentage, and inglorious descent, is much despised in the World. Well, how base soever the stock and ignoble the birth be, when grace unfeigned comes, it brings arms with it, it clarifies the blood, and makes the house illustrious. *Since thou wast precious in my eye, thou hast been honourable*, Eccl. 4. 4. Sincerity sets a mark of honour; If you see this Star shining, though over a mean Cottage, it tells thee a great Prince dwells there, an Heir of Heaven: Sincerity brings the creature into alliance with a high family, no less than

of the high God, by which new alliance, his own inglorious name is blotted out, and a new name given him; He bears the name of God, to whom he is joyned by a Faith unfeigned; and who dares say, that the God of heavens child, or Christs bride, are of an ignoble birth.

Thirdly, Again, A low purse, (as well as a low parentage) exposeth to contempt, yea, more: some by their purse redeem themselves in time (as they think) from the scorn of their mean stock. The little spring from whence the water came, by that time it hath run some miles, and swell'd into a broad River, is out of sight, and not enquired much after: But poverty, that it self sounds reproach in the ears of this proud World. Well, though a man were poor, even to a Proverb; yet if a yem of true godliness, sincere grace be but to be found running in his heart, here is a rich Mine, that will lift him up above all the Worlds contempt: such a one may possibly say, he hath no money in his house; but he cannot say, that he hath no treasure, that he is not rich, and speak true; he sure is rich, that hath a key to Gods treasury. The sincere soul is rich in God, what God hath, is his, *all is yours, you are Christs.*

Fourthly, Again, In a word, to name no more, parts and endowments of the mind, these are applauded above all the former by some; and indeed they carry in them an excellency, that stands more level to his noblest faculty (Reason) than the other, which are so far beneath its spiritual nature, that as *Gideon's* souldiers (some of them) could not drink the water till they bowed down on their knees, so neither could man take any relish in these, did he not first debase himself far beneath the lofty stature of his reasonable soul; but knowledge, parts and abilities of the mind, these seem to lift up mans head, and make him that he loseth none of his height; and therefore none so contemptible by the wise world, as those that are of weak parts, and mean intellectual abilities. Well, now let us see what cover sincerity hath for this nakedness of the mind, which seems the most shameful of all the rest. Where art thou Christian, that I may tell thee (who sittest lamenting and bemoaning thy weak parts, and shallow understanding) what a happy man thou art, with thy honest sincere heart, beyond all compare with these, whose sparkling parts do so dazzle thy eyes, that thou canst not see thy own priviledge above them? Their Pearl is but in the head, and they may be Toads for all that; but thine is in the heart, and 'tis the Pearl of Grace, that is the Pearl of greatest price. Thy sincere heart sets thee higher in Gods heart, than thy weak parts do lay thee low in their deceived opinion; and thou without the abilities of mind that they have, shalt find the way to Heaven; but they for all their strong parts, shall be tumbled down to Hell, because they have not thy sincerity. Thy mean gifts do not make thee incapable of Heavens glory; but their unsanctified gifts and endowments are sure to make them capable of more of Hells shame and misery. In a word, though here thy head be weak, and parts low; yet for thy comfort know, Thou

shalt have a better head given thee to thy sincere heart, when thou comest to Heaven; but their knowing heads shall not meet with better hearts in Hell, but be yoked eternally to their own wicked ones in torment; but enough of this. I come to the second kind of uncomeliness which sincerity covers, and that is sinful.

Secondly, Now this sinful uncomeliness must needs be the worst, because it lights on the most beautiful part, the Soul; if dirt thrown on the face be more uncomely than on another member (because 'tis the fairest) then no uncomeliness like that, which crocks and blacks the soul and spirit; because this is intended by God, to be the prime feat of mans beauty. Now that which most stains and deforms the Soul, must be that which most opposeth its chief perfection, which in its primitive creation was, and can still be no other, than the beauty of Holiness drawn on it, by the holy Spirits curious pencil; and what can that be, but the foul monster which is called Sin? This hath marr'd mans sweet countenance, that he is no more like the beauty of God created, than dead *Sarah's* face was like that beauty, which was a bait for the greatest Princes, and made her husband go in fear of his life, where-ever he came; nay, than the foul Fiend, now a cursed Devil in Hell, is like to the holy Angel he was in Heaven. This wound which is given by sin to mans nature, Christ hath undertaken to cure by his grace in his Elect: The cure is begun here, but not so perfected, that no scar and blemish remains; and this the great uncomeliness which sincerity lays its finger on, and covers.

SECT. III.

Quest. 2. But here the Question may be, How sincerity covers the Saints sinful uncomelinesses?

Ans. I shall answer to this, First, *Negatively*, and shew how it doth not; Secondly, *Affirmatively*, how it doth.

First, *Negatively*, how sincerity doth not cover them; and that in several particulars. First, Sincerity doth not so cover the Saints failings, as to take away their sinful nature; wandering thoughts are sins in a Saint, as well as in another; A weed will be a weed where-ever it grows, though in a garden among choicest flowers; They mistake then, who, because the Saints sins are covered, deny them to be sins. Secondly, It doth not cover them so, as to give us the least ground to think, that God doth allow the Christian to commit the least sin more than others; indeed 'tis inconsistent with Gods holiness to give, and with a Saints sincerity to pretend such a dispensation to be given them. A Father may, out of his indulgence and love to his child, pass by a failing in his waiting on him; as if he spills the Wine, or breaks the Glasses he is bringing to him; but sure he will not allow him to throw it down carelessly or willingly. Though a man may be easily intreated to forgive his friend that wounded him unawares, when he meant him no hurt; yet he will not before-hand give him leave to do it. Thirdly, It doth not so cover them, as that God should

should not see them, which is not only derogatory to his Omniscience, but to his mercy also; for he cannot pardon, what he doth not first see to be sin; God doth not only see the sins of his children, but their failings are more distasteful to him than others: because the persons in which they are found, are so dear, and stand so near unto him. A Dung-hill in a Princes Chamber would be more offensive to him, than one far off from his Court. The Christians bosome is Gods Court, Throne, Temple, there he hath taken up his rest for ever. Sin there must needs to be very unfavoury to his nostrils. *Fourthly*, It doth not so cover them, as that the Saints need not confess them, be humbled under them, or sue out a pardon for them; a Penny is as due debt as a Pound, and therefore to be acknowledged. Indeed that which is a sin of infirmity in the committing, becomes a sin of presumption by hiding of it, and hardening in it. *Job* held fast his integrity throughout his sad conflict; yet those failings which 'scaped him in the paroxysm of his afflictions, brought him upon his knees; *I abhor my self* (saith he) *and repent in dust and ashes*, *Job* 42. 6. *Fifthly*, and lastly, It doth not so cover them, as if our sincerity did the least merit, and deserve, that God should for it cover our other failings and infirmities; Were there such a thing as obedience absolutely compleat, it could not merit pardon for past sins; much less can an imperfect obedience (as sincerity is in a strict sense) deserve it for present failings. Obedience legally perfect, is no more than (as creatures) we owe to the Law of God; and how could that pay the debt of sin, which was it self due debt, before any sin was committed? Much less can Evangelical obedience (which is sincerity) do it, that falls short by far of that obedience we do owe. If he that owes twenty pounds, merits nothing when he pays the whole sum, then surely he doth not, that of the twenty pounds he owes, pays but twenty pence. Indeed Creditors may take what they please, and if they will say half satisfies them, it is discharge enough to the Debtor. But where did ever God say, he would thus compound with his Creature? God stands as strictly upon it in the Gospel-Covenant to have the whole debt paid, as he did in the first of works. There was required a full righteousness in keeping, or a full curse for breaking of the Law; so there is in the Evangelical; only here the wards of the lock are changed. God required this at the Creatures hand, in the first Covenant to be personally performed, or endured: But in the Gospel-Covenant he is content to take both at the hands of Christ our Surety, and impute these to the sincere Soul that unfeignedly believes on him, and gives up himself to him.

SECT. IV.

Secondly, To shew positively how Sincerity covers the Saints failings.

First, Sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annex'd. True indeed, 'tis Christ that covers all our sins and failings, but it is only the sincere Soul, over which he will cast his skirt. *Psalms*

32. 2. *Blessed is he whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* None will doubt this; but which is the man? The next words tells us his name; and in whose spirit there is no guile. Christs righteousness is the garment that covers the nakedness, and shame of our unrighteousness; Faith the grace that puts this garment on; but what Faith? None but the Faith unfeigned, as *Paul* calls it, *2 Tim.* 1. *Here's water*, said the Eunuch, *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* *Acts* 8. 36. Now mark *Philip's* answer, *Ver.* 37. *If thou believest with all thy heart, thou maist*: As if he had said, Nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. 'Tis the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut. He that promiseth to cover the sincere Souls failings, threatens to uncover the hypocrites impiety, *Prov.* 10. 9. *He that perverteth his way, shall be known*, that is, to his shame.

Secondly, Where Sincerity is, God approves of that Soul, as a holy righteous person, notwithstanding that mixture of sin which is found in him. As God doth not like the Saints sin for his sincerity, so he doth not un-saint him for that. God will set his hand to *Lor's* testimonial, that he is a righteous man, though many sins are recorded in the Scripture, which he fell into (and foul ones too) yet *Job* perfect, because the frame of his heart was sincere, the tenour of his life holy, and he was rather surprized by them as temptations, than they entertained by him upon choice. Though Sincerity doth not blind Gods eye, that he should not see the Saints sin, yet it makes him see it with a pitiful eye, and not wrathful! As a Husband knowing his Wife faithful to him in the main, pities her in other weaknesses, and for all them accounts her a good Wife. In all this (saith God) *Job* sinned not; and at the very close of his combat, God brings him out of the field with this honourable testimony to his friends, that had taken so much pains to bring his godliness in question; that his Servant *Job* had spoke right of him. Truly God said more of *Job*, than he durst of himself. He freely confesseth his unadvised froward speeches, and cries out, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* God saw *Job's* sins attended with sincerity, and therefore judged him perfect and righteous: *Job* saw his sincerity dash with many sad failings, and this made him in the close of all, rather confess his sins with shame, than glory in his grace. Gods mercy is larger to his Children, than their charity is many times to themselves and their Brethren. *First, To themselves*: Do you think the *Prodigal* (the emblem of a convert) durst have asked the robe, or desired his Father to be at such cost for his entertainment, as his Father freely bestowed on him? No sure, a room in the Kitchen we see was as high as he durst ask, to be among the meanest servants in the house: Poor Soul! he could not conceive he should have such a meeting with his Father at first sight. A robe! he might rather look for a rope, at least a rod. A feast at his Fathers table! O unlook'd for welcome! I doubt not but if any had met him on his way, and told him that his Father was resolv'd as soon as he came home, not to let him see his face, but presently pack him to

Bridge

Bride well, there to be whipt, and fed with bread and water for many moneths, and then perhaps he would at last look on him, and take him home, but in his starving condition this would have been good news to him; but as God hath strange punishments for the wicked, so he hath strange expressions of love and mercy for sincere souls. He loves to out-do their highest expectations, kiss, robe, feast, all in one day, and that the first day of his return; when the memory of his outrageous wickednesses were fresh, and the stinking scent of his swill and swine from which he was but newly come, hardly gone! What a great favourite is Sincerity with the God of heaven! Again, Gods mercy is larger to his Children, than their charity is towards one another. Those whom we are ready to un-faint for their failings that appear in their lives, God owns for his perfect ones, because of their sincerity. We find *Asa's* failings exprest, and his perfections voucht by God together, as I may say, in a breath, 2 Chron. 15. 17. It was well God clear'd that good man; for had but the naked story of his life, (as it stands in the Scripture) been recorded, without any exprest testimony of Gods approving him, his godliness would have hazarded a coming under dispute in the opinion of good men, yea, many more with him (concerning whom we are now put out of doubt, because we find them canonized for Saints by God himself) would have been calt, if a Jury of men, and those holy men too, had gone upon them. *Elijah* himself, because he saw none have such zeal for God, and his Worship, as to wear their colours openly in a free profession, and hang out a flag of defiance against the Idolatry of the times, by a stout opposing it, as he did, (which might be their sin) makes a sad moan to God, as if the Apostasie had been so general, that the whole species of the godly had been preserved in his single person. But God brings the holy man better news, 1 Kings 19. 18. *I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed down to Baal, and every month which hath not kissed him.* As if God had said, Comfort thy self *Elijah*; though my number be not great, yet neither is there such a dearth of Saints as thou fearest in this ungodly age; It is true, their Faith is weak, they dare not justle with the sins of the age, as thou dost, for which thou shalt not lose thy reward; yet those night-Disciples, that for fear carry their light in a dark-lantern, (having some sincerity which keeps them from polluting themselves with these Idolatries) must not, shall not be disowned by me. Yea, God, who bids us be most tender of his Lambs, is much more tender of them himself. Observable is that place, 1 John 2. 12, 13, 14. There are three ranks of Saints, *Fathers, Young men, little Children*, and the Spirit of God chiefly shews his tender care of them, as by mentioning them first, Verse 12. so by leaving the sweet promise of pardoning mercy in their lap and bosome, rather than either of the other; *Little children, I write unto you, for your sins are forgiven you for my Names sake.* But are not the Fathers sins, and the young mens also forgiven? Yes, who doubts it? But he doth not

so particularly apply it to them, as to these, because these from the sense of their own failings (out of which the other were more grown) were more prone to dispute against this promise in their own bosoms: yea, he doth not only in plain terms tell them, their sins are forgiven, but meets with the secret objection, which comes from their trembling hearts in opposition to this good news, taken from their own vileness and unworthiness, and stops its mouth with this, *forgiveness for my Names sake*, a greater name, than the name of their biggest sin, which discourageth them from believing.

Thirdly, Sincerity keeps up the Souls credit at the Throne of grace, so that no sinful infirmity can hinder its welcome with God. 'Tis the *regarding of iniquity in the heart*, (not the having of it) stops Gods ear from hearing our prayer. It is a temptation, not a few have found some work to get over; whether such as they, who see so many sinful failings in themselves, may take the boldness to pray, or without presuming to expect audience when they have prayed; and sometimes prevail so far, that because they cannot pray as they would, therefore they forbear what they should; much like some poor people, that keep from the Congregation, because they have not such cloaths to come in as they desire. To meet with such as are turning away from duty upon this fear, the promises (which are our only ground for prayer, and chief plea in prayer) are accommodated, and fitted to the lowest degree of grace; so that as a Picture well drawn, faceth all in the room alike that look on it; so the Promises of the Gospel-Covenant smile upon all that sincerely look to God in Christ. It is not said, *If you have faith like a Cedar*, but if you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, Matth. 17. 20. neither is justifying faith beneath miraculous faith in its own sphere of activity; the least faith on Christ, if sincere, as truly removes the mountainous guilt of sin from the soul, as the strongest; hence all the Saints are said to have *like precious faith*, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *Sarah's* faith (which in *Genesis* we can hardly see (as the story presents her) wherein it appeared) obtains an honourable mention, Heb. 11. where God owns her for a believer, as well as *Abraham* with his stronger faith. What love is it the promise entails the favours of God upon? Not *grace be with them that love our Lord Jesus* with a *Seraphim's* love, but with a sincere love, Ephes. 6. last. Not Blessed they who are holy to such a measure; this would have fitted but some Saints, the greatest part would have gone away and said, There's nothing for me, I am not so holy; but that no Saint might lose his portion, 'Tis Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; and this takes in all the children of God, even to the least babe, that is newly born this day to Christ. The new Convert hungers after holiness, and that sincerely. And wherefore all this care so to lay the promises? but to shew, that when we go to make use of any promise at the Throne of grace, we should not question our welcome for any of our infirmities, so this stamp of

of Sincerity be upon our hearts. Indeed if Sincerity did not thus much for the Saint, there could not be a prayer accepted of God at the hands of any Saint that ever was, or shall be on earth to the end of the world, because there never was, nor shall be such a Saint dwelling in flesh here below, in whom eminent failings may not be found. The Apostle would have us know, that *Elijah*, who did as great wonders in heaven and earth too by prayer, as who

greatest; yet this man God could soon have picked a hole in his coat. Indeed, lest we attribute the pre- valency of his prayers to the dignity of his person, and some eminency which he had by himself in grace above others, the Spirit of God tells us, he was of the same make with his poor brethren: *Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed, &c.* James 5. a weak hand with a sincere heart, is able to turn the key in prayer.

CHAP. VIII.

An account why Sincerity covers the Saints uncomelinesses.

Quest. **N**OW follows the fourth *Quere*, Whence is it that Sincerity thus covers our Failings?

SECT. I.

Reas. 1. It flows from the grace of the Gospel-Covenant, that relaxeth the rigour of the Law, which called for compleat Obedience; by resolving all that into this of Sincerity and Truth of Heart. Thus God when entering into Covenant with *Abraham*, expresseth himself, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect or sincere*, Gen. 17. 1. As if God had said to him, *Abraham*, see here what I expect at thy hands, and what thou maist expect at mine. I look that thou shouldst set me before thee, whom in thy whole course and walking thou wilt sincerely endeavour to please and approve thy self to, and at my hands thou maist promise thy self what an *Almighty God can do*, both in protecting thee in thy obedience, and pardoning of thee, where thou fallest short of perfect obedience; walk but in the truth of thy heart before me, and in Christ I will accept thee, and thy sincere endeavour, as kindly as I would have done *Adam*, if he had kept his place in innocency, and never sinned; indeed a sincere heart by vertue of this Covenant might (I mean the Covenant would bear him out, and defend him in it, relying on Christ) converse with God, and walk before him with as much freedom, and more familiarity (by reason of a nearer relation it hath) than ever *Adam* did, when God and he were best friends. If our heart condemn us not, then saith the Apostle, *we have confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. *πιστοίαν ἔχομεν*, we have a boldness of face. And 'tis not the presence of sin in us, (as the Covenant now stands) that Conscience can, or (if right informed concerning the renour of it) will condemn us for; *Paul's* conscience clear'd him, yea, afforded matter of rejoycing, and holy glorying at the same time, that he found sin stirring in him. No, Conscience is set by God to judge for him in the private Court of our own bosoms, and it is bound up by a Law, what sentence to give for, or against, and that is the same, by which Christ himself will acquit or condemn the World at last day. Now when we go upon the tryal for our lives before Christs

bar, the greatest inquest will be, whether we have been sincere or no? And as Christ will not then condemn the sincere soul, though a thousand sins could be objected against it; so neither can our hearts condemn us.

Quest. But here it may be askt, How comes God so favourable in the Covenant of the Gospel, to accept an obedience so imperfect at his Saints hands, who was so strict with *Adam* in the first, that the least failing, though but once 'scaping him, was to be accounted unpardonable?

Answ. The resolution of this Question take in these two particulars.

First, In the Covenant God made with mankind in *Adam*, there was no sponsor, or surety to stand bound to God for mans performance of his part in the Covenant, (which was perfect obedience) and therefore God could do no other but stand strictly with him; because he had none else, from whom he might recover his glory, and thereby pay himself for the wrong mans fault might do to him: But in the Gospel-Covenant there is a surety, Christ the righteous, who stands responsible to God for all the defaults and failings which occur in the Christians course. The Lord Jesus doth not only take upon him to discharge the vast sums of those sins, which he finds them charged with before conversion; but for all those dribbling debts, which afterward, through their infirmity, they contract, *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 2. 2. so that God may without any impeachment to his Justice, cross his Saints debts, which he is paid for by their surety; 'tis mercy indeed to the Saints, but justice to Christ, that he should: O happy conjunction, where mercy and justice thus conspire, and kiss each other!

Secondly, God did, and well might require full and perfect obedience of man in the first Covenant, because he was in a perfect state, of full power and ability to perform it, so that God lookt to reap no more than he had planted. But in the Gospel-Covenant God doth not at first infuse into the believer full grace, but true grace; and accordingly he expects not full obedience, but sincere. He considers our frame, and every believer is (if I may so say) rated in Gods books as the stock of grace is, which God gives to set up withal at first.

SECT.

X First Covenant
X Second Covenant

SECT. II.

Reaf. 2. The second Reason may be taken from the great Love he bears, and liking he takes to this disposition of heart, upon which follows this act of grace, to cover their failings where he spies it; 'tis the nature of Love to cover infirmities, even to a multitude. *Eſther* transgreſs'd the Law, by coming into *Aſaſhuernus's* preſence, before ſhe was ſent for; but Love ſoon erected a Pardon-Office in the Kings breaſt, to forgive her that fault; and truly ſhe did not find ſo much favour in the eyes of that great Monarch, as the ſincere Soul doth in the eyes of the great God. He did not more delight in *Eſthers* beauty, than God doth in this, *Prov. 11. 20.* *Such as are upright in their way, are his delight;* his Soul cloſeth with that man, as one that ſuits with the diſpoſition of his own holy nature, one whoſe heart is right with his heart; and ſo with infinite content to ſee a ray of his own excellency ſparkle in his creature, he delights in him, and takes him by the hand, to liſt him up into the boſome of his love, a better *Chariot* I trow, than that which *Jehu* prefer'd *Jehonadab* to, for his faithfulneſs to him. You ſeldom find any ſpoken of as upright in the *Scripture*, that are paſſed over with a plain, naked inſcription of their uprightness; but ſome circumſtance there is, which, like the coſtly work, and curious engraving about ſome Tombs, tell the Paſſenger, they are no ordinary men that lye there. God ſpeaking of *Job's* uprightness, repreſents him as a *Non-ſuch* in his age. *None like him in the earth, a perfect man, and upright;* Mention was before made of his vaſt Eſtate, and in that alſo he was a *Non-ſuch*; but when God comes to glory over Satan, by telling what a Servant he had to wait on him, he doth not count this worth the telling the Devil of; Not, haſt thou conſidered my Servant *Job*, *Job 1. 8.* that there is none ſo rich? but none ſo upright. When God ſpeaks to *Caleb's* uprightness, ſee to what a height he exalts him, *Numb. 14. 24.* *But my Servant Caleb, becauſe he had another ſpirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the Land, &c.* As if God had ſaid, Here's a man I do not count my ſelf diſparaged to own him for my Servant, and ſpecial Favourite; he is one that carries more worth in him, than the whole multitude of murmuring *Iſraelites* beſides, he had another ſpirit, that is, for excellency and nobleneſs, far above the reſt; and wherein did this appear? The next words reſolve us, *He hath followed me fully;* Now that which gain'd him this great honour from Gods own mouth, we ſhall find to be his ſincerity, and eſpecially in that buſineſs when ſent to ſearch the Land of *Canaan*, *Joſhua 14. 7.* and verſe 9. compared, he had great temptations to tell another tale. The *Iſraelites* were ſo ſick of their enterprize, that he ſhould be the welcomeſt meſſenger that brought the worſt news, from which they might have ſome colour for their murmuring againſt *Moses*, who had brought them into ſuch ſtraits; and of twelve that were ſent, there were ten that ſuited their anſwer to this diſcontented humour of the people; ſo that by making a contrary

report to theirs, he did not only come under the ſuſpicion of a lyar, but hazard his life among an enraged people; yet ſuch was the courage of this holy man, faithfulneſs to his truſt, and truſt in his God, that, as he ſaith himſelf, verſe 7. *He brought him* (that is, *Moses* who had ſent him) *word again, as it was in his heart;* that is, he did not for fear or favour accommodate himſelf, but what in his conſcience he thought true, that he ſpoke; and this, becauſe it was ſuch an eminent proof of his ſincerity, is called by *Moses*, ver. 9. *following God fully;* for which the Lord erects ſuch a Pillar of remembrance over his head, that ſhall ſtand as long as that *Scripture* it ſelf. To give out one inſtance more, and that is of *Nathanael*, at firſt ſight of whom Chriſt cannot forbear, but lets all about him know, how highly he was in his favour. *Behold* (ſaith he of him) *an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile,* *John 1. 47.* Chriſts heart (like the Babe in *Elizabeths* womb when *Mary* ſaluted her) ſeem'd thus to leap at the coming of *Nathanael*, yea, comes forth in this expreſſion, not to flatter him into an over-weening conceit of himſelf (Chriſt knew what an humble Soul he ſpoke to) but to bear witneſs to his own grace in him, eſpecially this of ſincerity; that knowing what a high price and value Heaven ſets upon the head of this grace, they might like wiſe Merchants ſtore themſelves with it more abundantly; His ſimplicity of heart made him an *Iſraelite indeed;* Many goodly ſhews, and pompous out-fides were to be ſeen among the Pharifees, but they were a company of baſe Projectors, and deſigners. Ever when ſome of them came to Chriſt; extolling him for his ſincerity, *Maſter, we know thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth,* *Matth. 22. 16.* then did they play the hypocrites, and had a plot to decoy him by their glozing ſpeech into danger; as you may perceive, ver. 15. *They came that they might intangle him;* but good *Nathanael* had no plot in his head, in his coming, but to find the *Meſſias* he looked for, and eternal life by him; and therefore though he was for the preſent wrap'd up in that common error of the times, that no Prophet could come out of *Galilee*, *John 7. 52.* much leſs ſo great a one as the *Meſſias*, out of ſuch an obſcure place in *Galilee*, as *Nazareth*; yet Chriſt ſeeing the honeſty and uprightness of his heart, doth not ſuffer his ignorance and error to prejudice him in his thoughts of him.

SECT. III.

Now to give ſome account, why this Grace of Sincerity is ſo taking with, and delightful to God, that it even captivates him in love to the Soul where he finds it. There are two things which are the inſeparable companions of Sincerity, yea, effects flowing from it, that are very taking to draw love both from God and man.

Fiſt, Sincerity makes the Soul willing: when 'tis clogg'd with ſo many infirmities, as to diſable it from the full performance of its duty; yet then the Soul ſtands on tip-toes to be gone after it; as the Hawk upon the hand, as ſoon as ever it ſees her

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game,

game, launcheth forth, and would be upon the wing after it, though possibly held by its sheath to the fist: Thus the sincere soul is inwardly prick'd and provok'd by a strong desire after its duty, though kept back by infirmities; a perfect heart and a willing mind are joyn'd together, 1 Chron. 28. 9. 'tis David's counsel to his son Solomon, to serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind. A false heart is a shifting heart, puts off its work so long as it dares, and 'tis little thanks to set about it when the rod is taken down; yet Hypocrites are like tops, that go no longer than they are whipt; but the sincere soul is ready and forward, it doth not want will to do a duty, when it wants skill and strength how to do it. The Levites (2 Chron. 29. 34.) are said to be more upright in heart, to sanctify themselves, than the Priests were. How appear'd that? In this, that they were more forward and willing to the work. No sooner did the word come out of the good Kings mouth, concerning a Reformation, verse 10. but presently the Levites arose to sanctify themselves; but some of the Priests had not such a mind to the business, and therefore were not so soon ready, verse 34. shewing more policy than piety therein, as if they would stay, and see first how the times would prove, before they would engage. Reformation-work is but an icy-path, which cowardly spirits love to have well beaten by others, before they dare come on it: But sincerity is of better metal; like the true traveller, that no weather shall keep him from going his journey when set: The upright man looks not at the clouds, stands not thinking this or that to discourage him, but takes his warrant from the Word of God, and having that, nothing but a counter-mand from the same God that sets him a-work, shall turn him back. His heart is uniform to the Will of God. If God saith, seek my face, it rebounds and echoes back again, thy face will I seek; yea Lord, as if David had said with a good will, thy Word is precious enough to carry me from this duty to that, whither thou pleasest; may be when the sincere soul is about a duty he doth it weakly, yet this very willingness of the heart is wonderful pleasing to God. How doth it affect and take the Father, when he bids his little child go and bring him such a thing (that may be as much as he can well lift) to see him not stand and shrug at the command as hard, but runs to it, and puts forth his whole strength about it, (though at last may be he cannot do it,) yet the willingness of the child pleaseth him so, that his weakness rather stirs up the Father to pity and help him, than to provoke him to chide him. Christ throws this covering over his Disciples infirmities, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. O! This Obedience, that like the dropping honey, comes without squeezing, though but little of it, tastes sweetly on Gods palate, and such is sincere Obedience.

Secondly, Sincerity makes the Soul very open and free to God: though the sincere soul hath many infirmities, yet it desires to cloak and hide none of this from God, no, if it could, it would not, and this is that which delights God exceedingly.

To be sure, he'll cover what such a soul uncovers, 1 John 1. 12. If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive.

It was a high piece of ingenuity and clemency in Augustus, that having promised by proclamation a great sum of money, to any that should bring him the head of a famous Pirate, did yet when the Pirate (who had heard of this) brought it himself to him, and laid it at his foot, not only pardon him for his former offences against him, but reward him for his great confidence in his mercy. Truly thus doth God, though his wrath be revealed against all sin and unrighteousness, yet when the soul itself comes freely and humbles it self before him, he cannot stretch forth his arm, to strike that soul which gives such glory to his mercy, and thus the sincere heart doth. Indeed the Hypocrite when he has sinn'd, hides it, as Achan his wedge of gold; he sits brooding on his lust, as Rachel on her Fathers Idols. It is as hard getting a Hen off her nest, as such a one to come off his lusts, and disclose them freely to God. If God himself find him not out, he will not bewray himself. I cannot set out the different disposition of the sincere and false heart in this matter, better than by the like in a mercenary servant, and a child; when a servant (except it be one of a thousand) breaks a glass, or spoils any of his Masters goods, all his care is to hide it from his Master, and therefore throws the pieces of it away into some dark hole or other, where he thinks they shall never be found; and now he is not troubled for the wrong he hath done his Master, but glad that he hath handled the matter so, as not to be discovered. Thus the Hypocrite would count himself a happy man, could he but by his sin out of Gods sight; it is not the treason he dislikes, but fears to be known that he is a Traitor: and therefore though it be as unfeasible to blind the eye of the Almighty, as with our hands cover the face of the Sun, that it should not shine, yet the Hypocrite will attempt it. We find a woe pronounced against such, Isa. 29. 15. We unto them that dig deep to hide their counsel from the Lord. This is a sort of sinners whose care is not to make their peace when they have offended, but to hold their peace, and stand demurely before God, as Gehazi before his Master, as if they had been nowhere, but where they should be. These are they whom God will put to shame to purpose. The Jews were far gone in this hypocrisy, when they justified themselves as a holy people, and put God so hard to it, as to make him prove his charge, rather than confess what was too true and apparent; which God upbraids them for, Jer. 2. 23. How canst thou say, I am not polluted? I have not gone after Balaam? see thy way in the valley, and know what thou hast done. Hast thou such a whorish fore-head to justify thy self, and hypocritical heart to draw a fair cover over so foul praetises? Would you yet pass for Saints, and be thought a people unpolluted? Now mark, 'tis not long, but this hypocritical people, that thus hid their sin, hath shame enough; As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so (saith the Prophet)

vers. 26. is the house of Israel ashamed; that is, as the thief, who at first is so insolent, as to deny the fact he is accused of, yet when upon search, the stolen goods are found about him, and he brought to justice for it, then he is put to double shame for his theft, and impudence also in justifying himself; so is it with this people (and with all hypocrites) though while in peace, and at ease, they be bragg, and bold; yea, seem to scorn to be thought what they indeed are; yet there is a time coming (which verse 24. is call'd, *their month, wherein they shall be found*) when Gods hue and cry will overtake them, his terrors ransack their consciences, and bring forth what they so stiffly denyed, making it appear to themselves and others also, what juggling and deceit they have used to shift off their sin. It is easie to think, what shame will cover their faces, and weigh down their heads while this is doing. God loves to befool those, who think they play their game so wisely, because with *Ahab*, they fight against God in a disguise, and will not be known to be the man. But the sincere Soul takes another course, and speeds better; as a Child when he hath committed a fault, doth not stay

till others go, and tell his Father what the matter is, nor till his Father make it appear by his frowning countenance, that it is come to his ear, but freely, and of his own accord, goes presently to his Father, (being prompted by no other thing, than the love he bears to his dear Father, and the sorrow, which his heart grows every moment he stays, bigger and bigger withal for his offence) and easeth his aking heart, by a free and full confession of his fault at his Fathers foot; and this with such plainheartedness, giving his offence the weight of every aggravating circumstance, so that if the Devil himself should come after him, to glean up what he hath left, he should hardly find where withal to make it appear blacker; Thus doth the sincere Soul to God, adding to his simplicity in confession of his sin, such a flow of sorrow, that God seeing his dear Child in such danger of being carried down too far towards despair, (if good news from him come not speedily to stay him) cannot but tune his voice, rather into a strain of comforting him in his mourning, than chiding him for his sin.

C. H A P. IX.

Of the odious Nature of Hypocrisie, and hatefulness of it to God.

Use 1. **D** Oth Sincerity cover all defects? Then Hypocrisie uncovers the Soul, and strips it naked to its shame before God, when set forth with the richest embroidery of other excellencies. This is such a scab, that frets into the choicest perfections, and alters the complexion of the Soul in Gods eye, more than Leprosie or Pox can do the fairest face in ours. It is observable, the different character that is given of those two Kings of Judah, *Asa* and *Amaziah*. Of the first, see 1 Kings 15. 14. *The high places were not removed, nevertheless Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* He passeth currant for a gracious person, and that with a *Non obstante*, *Nevertheless his heart was perfect*; Sincerity like true gold hath grains allowed for its lightness, his infirmities are not mentioned to stain his honour, and prejudice him in the opinion of any; but rather as the wart or mole, which the curiour Limner expresseth on purpose, the more to set forth the beauty of the other parts; so his failings are recorded to cast a greater lustre upon his sincerity; which could, notwithstanding these sins, gain him such a testimony from Gods own mouth. But of *Amaziah*, see 2 Chron. 25. 2. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.* The matter of his actions was good, but the scope and drift of his heart in them was nought, and this *but* makes a foul blot upon all, and turns his right into wrong; wherein his hypocrisie appear'd is express'd, 2 King. 14. 3. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his Father, he did according to all things that Joash his Father did.* He did for a while what David did, as

to the matter, but imitated *Joash*, as to the manner, whose goodness was calculated to please man rather than God, as appeared in the latter end of his reign upon the death of his good Uncle *Yehojada*; him did *Amaziah* write after, and not David in his uprightness; thus we see *Asa* his uprightness acquits him in the midst of many failings; but hypocrisie condemns *Amaziah* doing that which is right. Sincerity, it is the life of all our graces, and puts life into all our duties, and as Life makes beautiful, and keeps the Body sweet, so Sincerity the Soul, and all it doth. A Prayer breath'd from a sincere heart, it is Heavens delight; take away sincerity, and God saith of it, as *Abraham* of *Sarah* (whom living, he loved dearly, and laid in his bosome) *Bury the dead out of my sight*; he hides his eye, stops his nostril, as when some poysonous carrion is before us. *Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an abomination to me; the calling of your assemblies I cannot away with; your appointed feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* What stinking thing is this, that God cries so out upon? It is nothing but Hypocrisie. Surely, Friends, that must needs be very loathsome, which makes God speak so courly of his own Ordinances, yea, makes them a *Nebushtan*, Prayer no Prayer, but a meer Idol to be broken in pieces; Faith no Faith, but a fancy and a delusion; Repentance no Repentance, but a loud lye, Psalm 78. 34. *They returned, and enquired early after God; See how the Spirit of God glosseth upon this, verse 36, 37. Nevertheless they did flatter with their lips, and they lyed unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him.* It

smoked God out of his own house, and made him out of love with that place, whereof he had said, it should be his resting place for ever.

The hypocrite
It brought the wrath of God upon that unhappy people to the uttermost; Mark how the Commillion runs, which God gave the Assyrian, who was the bloody Executioner of his fierce wrath upon them, *Isa. 10. 5, 6. O Assyrian, the rod of my anger, and the staffe in their hand is mine indignation, I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoyle, and to take the prey, and to tread them down as mire in the street. See Jer. 7. 10, 11, 12, 13. ver.* There needs not the Coroner to be sent for, or a Jury go upon this miserable People, to find out how they came to their dismal end; they were an hypocritical Nation, that was it they dyed of. God had rather see the abomination of desolation standing in his Temple, making havock of all, than the abomination of dissimulation mocking him to his face, while they worship him with their lips, and their lusts with their hearts. Of the two 'tis more tolerable in Gods account, to see a *Belshazzar* that never had a name of being his Servant, to quasse and carouse it to his gods, prophanely in the bowls of the Sanctuary, than for a people that would pass for his servants, to pollute them in his own worship, by their cursed hypocrisie; If God be dishonoured, woe to that man of all, that doth it under shew of honouring him. God singles out the Hypocrite, as that sort of sinners, whom he would deal with hand to hand, and set himself, even in this life, to bear witness against, in a more extraordinary manner than others. The Thief, Murderer, and other the like sinners, provision is made by God, that the Magistrate should meet with them, they come under his cognizance; but the Hypocrite, he is one that sins more secretly, God alone is able to find him out, and he hath undertaken it, *Ezek. 14. 7. For every one of the House of Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his Idols in his heart, and cometh to a Prophet, to enquire of him concerning me; (An excellent description of a Hypocrite; he is one that denyes God his heart (reserving it for Idols, his lusts) yet is as forward as any, to enquire after God in his Ordinances) I the Lord will answer him by myself. And how shall he answer him? And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord, ver. 8.* That is, My judgements shall be so remarkable on him, that he shall be a spectacle of my wrath for others to see, and speak of. Thus God pays the Hypocrite often in this life, as *Ananias and Sapphira*, who dyed by the hand of God with a lye sticking in their throats; and *Judas*, who purchas'd nothing by his hypocritical trade, but a halter to hang himself withal; his playing the Hypocrite with Christ, ended in his playing the Devil upon himself, when he became his own Executioner. But if the Hypocrite at any time steals out of the World, before his Vizard falls off, and the wrath of God falls on him, it will meet him sure enough in Hell, and it will be poor comfort to him there, to think how

he hath cheated his Neighbours, in arriving at Hell, whom they so confidently thought under sayl for Heaven. The good opinion which he hath left of himself in those that are on Earth, will cool no flames for him in Hell, where Lodgings are taken up, and bespoken for the Hypocrite, as the chief guest expected in that Infernal Court; all other sinners seem but as younger Brethren in damnation to the Hypocrite, under whom as the great Heir, they receive every one their portion of wrath, bequeathed to them by the justice of God. *Matth. 24. 51. there the evil servant is threatened by his Master, that he will cut him asunder, and point him his portion with hypocrites.*

Quest. But why should God be so angry with the Hypocrite? He seems a tame creature to other sinners, that like wild beasts rage and raven, not fearing to open their mouths like so many wolves against Heaven, as if they would tear God out of his Throne by their blasphemies and horrid impieties. The Hypocrite is not thus woaded with impudency, to sin at Noon-day, and spread his Tent with *Abelom* on the house-top: If he be naught, it is in a corner, his Maiden-blush modesty will not suffer him to declare his sin, and be seen in the company of it abroad; Nay, he denies himself of many sins, which others maintain; and walks in exercise of many duties, which the Atheistical spirits of the World deride and scorn: Why then should the Hypocrite, that lives like a Saint to others, be more distasteful to him?

Ans. Indeed the Hypocrite at first blush may be taken for a kind of Saint, by such as see only his outside, as he passed by in his holy-day dress, which he is beholding to, for all the reputation he hath in the thoughts of others, and therefore is fitly by one called the strangers Saint, but a Devil to those that know him better: He is like some cunning Cripple, that is fain to borrow help from Art, to hide the defects of Nature; such as false hair to cover his baldness, an artificial eye to blind his blindness from others sight; and the like for other parts. Here's much ado made to commend him, for some beautiful person to others; but what a monster would this man appear, should one but see him through the Key-hole, 'as he is in his Bed-chamber, where all these are laid aside? Truly, such a one, and far more fearful, would the Hypocrite be found, when out of his acting robes, which he makes use of only, when he comes forth upon the Stage, to play the part of a Saint before others. It were enough to affright us, only to see the Hypocrite uncased; what then will it be to himself, when he shall be laid open before Men and Angels? So odious this generation is to God, that it is not safe standing near them; *Moses* that knew *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* better than the people (who taken with their seeming zeal, flock'd after them in throngs) commands them to depart from the Tents of those wicked men, except they had a mind to be consumed with them; such horrid hypocrisie he expected vengeance would soon overtake. But that it may appear to be a sin exceeding sinful, I shall give a few aggravations of it, in which so many reasons will be wrapt, why it is so odious to God.

First,

First, Hypocrisie is a sin that offers violence to the very light of nature; That light which convinceth us there is a God, tells us he is to be serv'd, and that in truth also, or all is to no purpose. A lye is a sin that would flye on the face of a Heathen, and hypocrisie is the loudest lye, because it is given to God himself; so Peter told that dissembling wretch, *Acts* 5. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lye to the holy Ghost?* v. 4. *thou hast lyed not to man, but unto God.*

Secondly, Hypocrisie cannot so properly be said to be one single sin, as the sinfulness of other sins; it is among sins, as sincerity among graces; now that is not one grace but an ornament, that beautifies and graces all other graces. The preciousness of faith is, that it is unfeigned, and of love to be without dissimulation. Thus the odiousness of sins is, when they are committed in hypocrisie. David aggravates the sin of those jeering companions, who made him their table-talk, and could not taste their cheer, except season'd with some salt jest quibb'd out at him, with this, that they were *Hypocritical mockers*, *Psal.* 35. 16. they did it sily, and wrapt up their scoffs (tis like) in such language as might make some think, (who did not well observe them) that they applauded him. There is a way of commending, which some have learnt to use, when they mean to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scorers. Feavers are counted malignant, according to the degree of putrefaction that is in them. Hypocrisie is the very putrefaction, and rottenness of the heart; the more of this putrid stuff there is in any sin, the more malignant it is. David speaks of the iniquity of his sin, *Psal.* 32. 5. *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah, by his long keeping silence, *vers.* 3. by the pardon he had immediately given in upon confessing, *vers.* 5. which we know Nathan delivered to him, and by his further purpose to continue confessing of it, which appeared by the mournful *Psal.* 51. that followed upon his discourse with Nathan. Now David to make the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith, he did not only forgive his sin, but the iniquity of his sin; and what was that? surely the worst that can be said of that his complicated sin, is, that there was so much hypocrisie in it, he wofully juggled with God and man in it; this, I do not doubt to say, was the iniquity of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it, than the blood which he shed. And the rather I lay the accent there, because God himself, when he would set out the hainousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisie in the fact, than the fact it self, as appears by the testimony given this holy man, *1 Kings* 15. 5. *David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite; were*

there not other wry steps that David took beside this? doth the Spirit of God by excepting this, declare his approbation of all, that else he ever did? no sure, the Spirit of God records other sins, that escap'd this eminent servant of the Lord: But all those are drown'd here, and this mentioned as the only stain of his life. But why? surely because there appear'd less sincerity, yea more hypocrisie in this one sin, than in all his other put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet to lay it in a long swoon; as to any actings thereof. And truly the wound went very deep, when that grace was stabb'd, in which did run the life-blood of all the rest. We see then, God had reason (though his mercy prompted him, yea his Covenant obliged him, not to let his Child dye of this wound, I mean finally miscarry of this sin, either through want of repentance on the one hand, or pardoning mercy on the other) so to heal it, that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sin, whereby others might know how odious Hypocrisie is to God.

Thirdly, Those considerations which may seem at first to lessen, and pare off something from the hainousness of the Hypocrites sin, viz. That he walks in a religious habit, hath a form of piety which others want, performs duties that others neglect; These and the like, are so far from taking from, that they add a further weight of aggravation to it. Let us consider the Hypocrite in a two-fold respect, and this will appear either in the things he trades about; or secondly in the things he lays claim to; these are both high, and sacred; and a sin in these, can be no ordinary sin. The things he trades in, are duties of Gods worship; the things he lays claim to, are relation to God, interest in Christ, consolations of the spirit, and the like; these are things of high price; a miscarriage about these, must be somewhat suitable to their high nature. As is the wool, so the thread, and cloth coarse or fine. The profane person pretends not to these, he cannot spin so fine a thread, because the work he deals in is courser; all his impieties will not have so high price of wrath set upon them, which he hath (being ignorant of God, and a stranger to the ways of God) committed, as the hypocrites.

SECT. I.

First, The hypocrite trades in the duties of Gods worship. Judas sits down with the rest of the Apostles at the Passeeover, and bids himself welcome as confidently, as if he were the best guest; the holiest of all the company. The proud Pharisee gets to the Temple as soon as the broken-hearted Publican: but what work doth the hypocrite make with these things? that would be known indeed. Sad work (the Lord knows) or else God would not so abominate them, as to think he hears a dog bark, or

Note

or a wolf howl all the while they are praying. We think *David* had a curious hand at the Harp, that could pacifie the evil, raging spirit of melancholy in *Saul*; But what a harsh unhappy stroke have they in the duties of Gods worship, that are able to make the sweet meek Spirit of God angry, yea, break out in to fury against them? And no wonder if we consider but these two things.

hypo-rite
fig tree
First, The Hypocrite does no less than mock God in all his duties, and of all things God can least bear that; *God will not be mocked*. Christ preached this Doctrine, when he cursed the Fig-tree, which did by her green leaves mock the passenger, making him come for fruit, and go ashamed without any; had it wanted leaves as well as fruit, it had escaped that curse. Every lie is a mocking of him to whom 'tis told; because such a one goes to cheat him, and thereby puts the fool upon him; *Why hast thou mock'd me* (said *Dalilah* to *Samson*) and told me lyes? *Judg. 16. 10.* as if she had said (as is usual upon the like with us) do you make a fool of me? I leave it to the Hypocrite to think seriously what he is going to make of God, when he puts up his hypocritical services. Gods command was, none should appear before him empty; this the Hypocrite doth, and therefore mocks God, he becomes indeed full-mouth'd, but empty-hearted. As to the formality of a duty he oft exceeds the sincere Christian; he, if any, may truly be called a *Master of Ceremonies*; because all that he entertains God with in duty, lies in the courtship of his tongue and knee. How abhorrent this is to God, may easily be judged by the disdain, which even a wise man would expresse to be so served; better to pretend no kindness, than pretending to intend none; 'tis the heart God looks at in duty; if the Wine be good, he can drink it out of a wooden cup; but let the cup be never so gilded, and no Wine in it, he makes account that man mocks him, that would put it into his hand. It was Christs charge against *Sardis*, *Rev. 3. 2.* *I have not found thy works perfect before God*; I have not found them *πληρη, full before God*, as the Original hath it. Sincerity fills our duty, and all our actions; and mark that Phrase *before God*, which implies that this Church retained such an outward form of Devotion, as might keep up her credit before men; she had a name to live, but her works were not full before God; he pierced them deeper than mans probe could go, and judgeth her by what he found her within.

Secondly, The Hypocrite performs the duties of Gods worship on some base design or other, and this makes him yet more abominable to God, who disdains to have his holy Ordinances prostituted to serve the Hypocrites lust, used only as a stream to turn about his Mill, and handsomely effect his carnal projects. When *Abolom* had formed his plot, within his own natural bosome, and was big with his Treason, as ever Cockatrice was with her poisonous egg, to *Hebron* he goes in all haste, and that (forsooth) to pay an old Vow, which in the time of his affliction he had made to the Lord, *2 Sam. 15. 10, 11.* Who

would not think the man was grown honest, when he begins to think of paying his old debts? but the wretch meant nothing less; his errand thither was to lay his Treason under the warm wing of Religion, that the reputation he should gain thereby, might help the sooner to hatch it. And I wish that as *Abolom* dyed without a Son to keep his name in remembrance; so that none had been left behind to inherit his cursed hypocrisie, that the World might have grown into a happy ignorance of so monstrous a sin; but alas, this is but a vain wish, *vivit, imo in Templum venit*, this kind of hypocrisie yet lives, yea, comes as boldly to out-face God in his Worship as ever; many making no better use of the exercise of it, than some do of their Sedans, to carry them unseen to the enjoyment of their lust. And is it any wonder, that God who hath appointed his Ordinances for such high and holy ends, should abhor the Hypocrite, who thus debaseth them in the service of the Devil? Did you invite some to a costly feast at your house, who instead of feeding on the dainties you have provided for them, should take and throw all to their dogs under the Table, how would you like your guest? The Hypocrite is he that casts Gods holy things to his dogs. God invites us to his Ordinances, as to a rich Feast, where he is ready to entertain us, in sweet communion with himself; What horrid impiety is it then that the Hypocrite commits? who when he is set at Gods Table, feeds not of these dainties himself, but throws all to his lusts, some to his Pride, and some to his Covetousness; propounding to himself no other end in coming to them, than to make provision for these lusts, as *Hamor* and *Sechem* his Son, who when they would persuade the people of their City to submit to Circumcision, used this as the great Argument to move them, that they should grow rich by the hand. *If every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours?* *Gen. 34. 21, 22.* A goodly Argument, was it not, in a business of such a high nature, as coming under a solemn Ordinance? they rather speak as if they were going to a Horse-market, or Cow-fair, than to a Religious duty. Truly, though most Hypocrites have more wit, than thus to print their thoughts, and let the World read what is writ in their hearts, yet as *Queen Mary* said of *Callis*, if she were ript up, it would be found in her Heart; so some such low things, as vain-glory, worldly profit, &c. would be found engraven in the Breasts of all Hypocrites, as that which they most aim at in the duties of Religion.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Consider the Hypocrite in the things he lays claim to, and they are no small Priviledges; relation to God, interest in Christ; who more forward to Saint himself, to pretend to the graces and comforts of the Spirit, than the Hypocrite? As we see

see in the Pharisees, whose great design was to get a name, and that not such as the great Ones of the Earth have for prowess, worldly majesty, and the like, but for sanctity and holiness; and they had it, if it would do them any good. *Verily, saith Christ, they have their reward,* Matth. 6. 2. They would be thought for great Saints, and so they are by the multitude, who did so applaud them for their holiness, which faced their outside, that they had a Proverb, If but two could be saved, one of the two should be a *Pharisee*. We read of some that *profess they know God, but in works they deny him,* Titus 1. 16. They boldly brag of their acquaintance with God, and would be thought great favourites of his, though their lives are *Antipodes* to Heaven: So Rev. 3. 9. we meet with some that *say they are Jews, and are not, but lye.* They dwell sure by ill Neighbours, none would say so much for them, but themselves; the Hypocrite is so ambitious to pass for a Saint, that he commonly is a greater censurer of the true graces of others, as too much hindering the prospect of his own; like *Herod*, who (as *Eusebius* writes) being troubled at the baseness of his own birth, burnt the *Jews* antient *Genealogies*, the better to defend his own pretended noble descent. Who now is able to give a full account to this high climbing sin of hypocrisy? It is a sin that highly reproacheth God, to have such a vile wretch claim kindred with him. Christ indeed is not ashamed to call the poorest Saints *Brethren*, but he disdains to have his name seen upon a rotten-hearted Hypocrite; as Princes to have their Effigies stamp'd on base metals. What scorn was put upon that Mock-Prince, *Perkin Warbeck*, who (having got some fragments of Courtship, and tutor'd how to act his part) was presented to the World as Son to *Edward the Fourth* of this Nation, but when he had aped a while the state of a Prince, was taken, and with his base ignoble Pedigree (writ in great Letters) pinn'd at his back, sent about, that where-ever he came, he might carry his shame with him, till in the end he was sent to act the last part of his Play at the Gallows. But what is all this to the Hypocrites portion? who for abusing others here with a seeming sanctity, as if indeed he was of heavenly extraction, a child of God, and heir of glory, shall be brought at the great Day to be hissed, and hooted at by Men and Angels, and after he hath been put to this open shame, be thrown deepest into Hell. Of all sinners he doth most mischief in this World, and therefore shall have most torment in the other. There is a double mischief which none stand at like advantage to do as the Hypocrite by his seeming Saintship. The one he doth while his credit holds, and he passeth for a Child of God in the opinion of his Neighbours; the other when his reputation is cracked, and he discovered to be what he is, a Hypocrite. The mischiefs he doth when his mask is on, is, as a Deceiver; *Machiavel* knew what he did in commending to princes a resemblance of Religion, though he forbade any more; It hath been found the most taking bait, to decoy people into their snare, who come in apace, when Religion is the flagg that is set up. *Ehud* could not have thought on a surer key to open all doors,

and procure him admittance into King *Eglon's* presence, than to give out he had a message from the Lord to him; this raised such an expectation, and bred such a confidence, that room is made for him; presently all depart, and he left alone with the King; yea, the King will rise to hear this message that comes from the Lord, and so gives him a greater advantage to run him into the guts: Had not some in our days pretended highly to Saintship, I doubt not, but they would have found the door shut, where now they have too much welcome, and find it easie to procure belief to their errors. Even the Elect are in some danger, when one cryed up for a Saint, is the Messenger that brings the error to Town, and that under the notion of a message from God; I confess the Hypocrite acts his part so handsomely, that he may do some good accidentally, his glittering profession, heavenly discourse, excellent gifts in Prayer or Preaching, may affect much the sincere Soul, and be an occasion of real good to his Soul, as the Stage-player, though his tears be counterfeited, may stir up by his seeming passion, real sorrow in his spectators, so as to make them weep in earnest; thus the Hypocrite acting his part with false affections, may be a means to draw forth, and excite the Christians true graces; but then is such a one much more in danger to be ensnared by his error, because he will not be readily suspicious of any thing that he brings, whom he hath found really helpful to his grace or comfort; and thus the good the Hypocrite doth, makes him but able to do the greater hurt in the end. *Sisera* had better have gone without *Jael's* butter and milk, than by them to be laid asleep against she came with her nail; and it had been far happier for many in our days, not to have tasted of the gifts, and seeming graces of some, than to have been so taken with this sweet Wine, as to drink themselves drunk into an admiration of their persons, which hath laid them asleep, and thereby given them whom they have applauded so much, but advantage the more easly to fasten their nail to their heads, errors, I mean, to their judgements. The other mischief the Hypocrite doth, is, when discovered, and that is as he is a scandal to the ways of God, and servants of God. It is said of *Sampson*, *The dead which he slew at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life,* Judges 16. 30. Truly the Hypocrite doth more hurt when he is discovered, which is the death of his profession, than when he seemed to be alive. The wicked worldlings that are not long seeking a staff to beat the Saints with, have now one put into their hands by the Hypocrite. O how they can run division upon this harsh note, and besmear the face of all Professors with the dirt they see upon one false Brothers coat, as if they could take the length of all their feet, by the measure of one Hypocrite; hence comes such base language as this: They are all of a pack, not one better than another: Indeed this is very absurd reasoning, as if one should say, No Coyne were current, and right silver, because now and then a brass Shilling is found amongst the rest; but this language fits the mouth of the ungodly World; and woe be to the man that makes these arrows for

for them by his hypocrisie, which they shoot against the Saints; better he had been thrown with a Mill-stone about his neck into the Sea, than have lived to give such an occasion for the enemy to blaspheme.

CHAP. X.

where all are stirred up to put themselves upon the Tryal, whether Sincere or not; three Arguments used to provoke to the work; and four false Characters, by which the Hypocrite flatters himself into a conceit of being Upright.

Use 2. **S**ECONDLY, Doth Sincerity cover all a Saints infirmities? This shews how behooveful it is for every one to try his ways, and search narrowly his heart, whether he be sincere or hypocritical.

SECT. I.

First, All depends on it, even all thou art worth in another World; 'tis thy making or marring for ever, Psalm 125. 5. *Do good, O Lord, to them whom thou art upright in heart; as for such as turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; that is the end the Hypocrite is sure to come to; he would indeed then fain pass for a Saint, and crowd in among the godly, but God shall lead him forth with workers of iniquity, company that better befits him; 'tis Sincerity shall carry it in that day. I will come (saith Paul) 1 Cor. 4. 19. to you shortly, and will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power; for the Kingdom of God, is not in word, but in power; What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love? O friends, not Paul, but Christ will shortly come unto us, and he will know the speech, and soothing language of such as are puffed up with an empty name of profession, but will know the power, gage the heart, and see what is in it: Now will ye that he come with a Rod, or in Love? To judge you as Hypocrites, or to give you the Edge of a Faithful servant? Doth not he spend his time ill, that takes pains in his Trade, and lays out all his stock upon such a commodity, which when he opens his Stall, will be seized for false ware, and he clapped up for abusing the Countrey? All that ever the Hypocrite did, will in the great day of Christ be found counterfeit, and he sure to be laid by the heels in Hell, for going about to cheat God and man; every mans works shall then be manifest, that day shall declare it. Even the sincere Christian where he hath tampered with Hypocrisie, shall lose that his work; but the Hypocrite with his work, his Soul also.*

Secondly, Consider hypocrisie lies close in the heart; if thou beest not very careful, thou maist easily pass a false judgement on thy self; they who were sent to search the Cellar under the Parliament, at first saw nothing but coals and winter-provision, but upon a review, when they came to throw away that stuff, they found all but provision for the Devil's Kitchen; then the mysterie of iniquity was uncased, and the Barrels of Powder appear'd. How many are there, that from some duties of Piety they

perform, some seeming zeal they express in profession, presently cry, *omnia bene*, and are so kind to themselves, as to vote themselves good Christians, who, did they but take the pains to throw these aside, they might find a foul Hypocrite at the bottom of them all; Hypocrisie often takes up her lodging next door to Sincerity, and so she passes unfound, the Soul not suspecting Hell can be so near Heaven. And as Hypocrisie, so Sincerity is hard to be discovered; this grace often lies low in the heart, (like the sweet Violet in some valley, or near some brook) hid with Thorns and Nettles, Infirmities I mean: So that there requires both care and wisdom, that we neither let the weed of hypocrisie stand, nor pluck up the herb of Grace in its stead.

Thirdly, 'Tis feasible; I do not set you about an endless work; the heart of man I confess is as a ruffled skein of silk, not easily unwarled, yet with a faithful use of the means, it may be dis-entangled and wound up on the right bottom of Sincerity or Hypocrisie. Job, when Satan and his cruel Friends laboured to royl his spirit most, and muddy the stream of his former course and condition, (by throwing their Objections as so many stones into it;) yet he could see this precious gem at the bottom, sparkling most brightly; yea, *Hezekiah* in the very brim of the grave, recreates his spirit with it. Indeed (friends) this is a souls encouragement, that it shall not want Gods help in this search, if it goes about it with honest desires. A Justice will not only give his Warrant to search a suspicious house, but if need be, will command others to be aiding to him in the business; Word, Ministers, Spirit, all thou shalt have for thy assistance in this work; only have a care thou dost not mock God in the business; that soul deserves to be damned to this sin, who in the search for hypocrisie, plays the Hypocrite; like a naughty dishonest Constable, that willingly over-looks him whom he searcheth for, and then lays he cannot find him.

Now, for the fuller satisfaction in this Point, and help in the tryal, because 'tis that which both good and bad are mistaken in; the carnal wretch flattering himself, his heart is good and honest; the sincere soul kept under fear of being a Hypocrite; Satan abusing them both; I shall therefore first lay down the grounds of an Hypocrite, with which he shores up his rotten house, and shew the fallacies of them. Secondly, I will lay down the grounds of the weak Christians fear for his being a Hypocrite, and the weakness of them. Thirdly, Some positive discoveries of Sincerity, which no Hypocrite ever did, or can reach to.

SECT.

SECT. II.

First, For the Hypocrite, he will stand upon his defence; his heart is sincere: well, how will he prove it?

First, The Hypocrite will say, Sure I am no Hypocrite, for I cannot endure it in another.

Ans. This is not enough to clear thee from being a Hypocrite, except thou can shew thou dost this from a holy ground. *Jehu* that ask'd *Jehonadab* whether his heart was right, carried at that same time a false one in his own breast. It is very ordinary for a man to decry that in another, and smartly to delaim against it, which he all the while harbours himself. How severe was *Judah* against *Tamar*! he commands in all haste to burn her, *Gen. 38. 24.* who would not have thought this man to be chaste? yet he was the very person that had defiled her. There may be a great cheat in this piece of Zeal; sometimes the very place a man is in, may carry him, as the *primum mobile* does the Stars, in a motion which his own *Genius* and liking would never lead him: Thus many that are Magistrates give the Law to drunkards and swearers, merely to keep the *decorum* of their place, and shun the clamour that would arise from their neglect, who can possibly do both, when they meet with place and company fit for their purpose. Some their zeal against anothers Sin is kindled at the disgrace which reflects upon them by it, in the eye of the World; and this falls out, when the Sin is publick, and the person that committed it stands related; this is conceiv'd to be *Judah's* case, who was willing his Daughter should be taken out of the way, that the blot which she had brought upon his Family, might with her be out of sight. Some again find it a thriving Trade, and make this advantage of inveighing against others faults, to hide their own the better, that they may carry on their own designs with less suspicion. *Absolom* asperseth his Father's Government, as a stirrup to help himself into the saddle. *Jehu* lov'd the Crown more than he hated *Jezabel's* Whoredoms, for all his loud cry against them. In a word, (for 'tis impossible to hit all) there may be much of Revenge in it, and the Person is rather shot at, than his Sin; this was observ'd of *Anthony's* zeal against *Augustus*, *Odis tyrannum, amavit tyrannidem*; he hated the Tyrant, but lov'd well enough the tyranny.

Secondly, Saith the Hypocrite, I am bold, and fearless in dangers, sure I am no Hypocrite; *Fearfulness surprizeth the Hypocrite*: But 'tis the Righteous that is bold as a Lion.

Ans. The better way sure, were to try thy Boldness by thy Sincerity, than to conclude thy Sincerity by thy Boldness. Truly, confidence, and a spirit undaunted at death and danger, are glorious things, when the Spirit and Word of Christ stand by to vouch them, when the Creature can give some account of the hope that is in him, as *Paul* who shews how he came by it. This is Christian (not Roman) courage, *Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4.* many rooms he passeth before he comes to this, which

indeed joyns upon Heaven it self; Faith is the key which lets him into all. First, it opens the door of Justification, and lets it into a state of peace, and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ; *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, v. 1.* through this he passeth on to another, the presence-chamber of Gods favour, and is admitted nigh unto him, as a Traytor once pardoned is, *by whom also we have access by him into this grace wherein we stand, v. 2.* that is, we have not only our Sins pardoned, and our persons reconciled to God by faith in Christ, but now under Christs wing, we are brought to Court as it were, and stand in his grace as favourites before their Prince; this opens into a third, and *rejoyce in the hope of glory*; we do not only at present enjoy the grace and favour of God, and communion with him here, but have from this a hope firmly planted in our hearts for Heavens glory hereafter. Now he is brought to the most inward room of all, which none can come at, but he that goes through all the former, *v. 3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.* If thou hast not entred at these doors, thou art a thief and a robber; thou gettest thy confidence too quickly to have it brought to thy hand by God; if God means thee well for Eternity, he'll make thee smart for this thy boldness, as he did *Jacob* for stealing his fathers blessing; and therefore content not thy self with a bare boldness and confidence in dangers, but enquire whether it hath a Scripture-bottom, and basis to stand on, or whether the pillars supporting it, be not ignorance in thy mind, and stupidity in thy conscience; if the latter, thou art in a sad condition; thy boldness will last no longer than thou seest it doth in one that is drunk, who when he is wine-sprung, thinks (as they say, he can skip over the Moon) and ventures to go without fear upon precipices, and pit-falls; but when sober, trembles to see what he did in his drunken fit. *Nabal* that fear'd nothing when drunk, his heart dyes within him, and became as a stone, at the story *Abigail* told him in the morning, when the wine was gone out of him, *1 Sam. 25. 37.* Therefore as he when his cause miscarried, through the sleepiness of the Judge on the Bench, *appeal'd from the Judge asleep, to the Judge awake*; so do I here with you, that through the present stupidity of conscience are bold and fearless of death, and from this plead your uprightness. I appeal from your Conscience asleep, to the Sentence it will give when it shall be awake; which I wish may be in this World, that you may see your mistake where you may amend it.

Thirdly, Sure saith another, I am no Hypocrite, for I perform secret duties in my closet; the Hypocrite he is no body, except on the Stage; it is the brand of the Hypocrite, he courts the World for its applause, and therefore does all abroad.

Ans. Though the total neglect of secret duties in Religion, speaks a person to be an Hypocrite, yet the performing of duties in secret, will not demonstrate thee a sincere person; Hypocrisie is in this like the Frogs brought on *Egypt*, no place was free of them, no not their bed-chambers; they crept into their most inward rooms; and so doth

F f hypocrisie

✓ hypocritise into closet-duties, as well as publick; indeed though the place be secret where such duties are performed, yet the matter may be so handled, (and is by some Hypocrites) that they are not secret in their closets; like the Hen who goes into a secret place to lay her egg, but by her cackling tells all the house where she is, and what she is doing. But where this is not, 'tis not enough; for we must not think but some Hypocrites may and do spin a thread finer than other; in all Arts there are some exceed others, and so in this trade of hypocritise; the gross Hypocrite, whose drift is to deceive others, his Religion commonly is all without doors; but there is an Hypocrite that labours to keep a fair quarter with himself, and is very desirous to make Conscience on his side, which to procure, he'll go to the utmost link of his chain, and do any thing that may not separate him and his beloved lusts; now secret Prayer and other duties, may be so performed, as that they shall not more prejudice a mans lusts than any other; 'tis not the Sword, though very sharp, that kills, but the force that it is thrust withal; indeed there are some secret duties, as examination of our hearts, trying of our ways, and serious meditation of the threatnings of the Word, against such sins as we find in our own bosoms, with close application of them to our selves, would put sin hard to it; but the Hypocrite can lay this sword so easily and favourably on, that his lusts shall not cry Oh at it; therefore still there needs a *melius inquirendum*, a fuller search before thou canst come off.

Fourthly, Sure I am not an Hypocrite, for I do not only pray (and that in secret too) against my sins, but I also fight against them, yea, and that to good purpose; for I can shew you the spoils of my victories, that I have got over some of them. There was a time I could not go by the Ale-house, but my lust bid me stand, and pull'd me in; but now, I thank God, I have got such a mastery of my drunken lust, that I can pass by without looking in.

Ans. 'Tis good what thou dost say, and I wish all thy drunken Neighbours could speak as much, that when the Magistrate will not, or cannot spoil that drunken trade, they that keep those shops for the Devil, might even shut up their windows for want of customers. But is it not pity, that what is good should be marr'd in the doing? Yet 'tis too common, and may be thy case.

First, Let me ask thee, how long it hath been thus with thee? Lusts (as to the actings, I mean) are like Agues, the fit is not alwayes on, and yet the man not rid of his disease; and some mens Lusts, like some Agues, have not such quick returns as others. The River doth not move alwayes one way, now 'tis coming, anon falling water; and though it doth not rise when it falls, yet it hath not lost its other motion. Now the tyde of Lust is up, and

anon 'tis down, and the man recoils, and seems to run from it, but it returns again upon him. Who would have thought to have seen Pharaoh in his mad fit again, that should have been with him in his good mood, when he bid Moses and the people go? But alas, the man was not altered: Thus may be when a strong occasion comes, this (like an Easterly wind to some of our Ports) will bring in the tyde of thy Lust so strongly, that thy Soul that seem'd as clear of thy lust, as the naked Sands are of water, will be in a few moments covered, and as deep under their waves as ever. But the longer the banks have held, the better; yet shouldst thou never more be drunk as to the outward fulfilling of the Lust, yet this is not enough to clear thee from being an Hypocrite.

Secondly, Therefore let me ask thee, What was the great Motive to take thee off? That may be as bad (in some sense) which keeps thee from the Ale-house now, as that which heretofore drew thee to it. 'Tis ordinary for one Lust to spoil anothers market; he that should save his money from guzzling it down his throat, to lay on more finery on his back; what doth this man do, but rob one lust to sacrifice it to another? Whether was it, God or Man, God or thy Purse, God or thy Pride, God or thy Reputation, that knock'd thee off? If any but God prevail'd with thee, Hypocrite is a name will better now become thee, than when in the Ale-house. Again, if God, what apprehensions of God were they that did it? Some, the wrath of God for some particular sin hath so shak'd, that (as one scared with an Apparition in a room, cares not for lying there any more, so) they dare not, at least for a long time, be acquainted with that practice again; And as it is not the room, but the Apparition, that the one dislikes, so, not the sin, but the wrath of God that haunts it, which the other flees from. In a word, May be thou hast laid down this sinful practice, but didst thou hate it, and love God, and so leave it? Thou art become strange to one, have you not got acquaintance with any other in the room of it? Thou hast laid down the commission of an evil, but hast thou taken up thy known duty? He is a bad Husband that drains his ground, and then neither sows nor plants it: It's all one if it had been under water, as drain'd and not improved: What if thou cease to do evil (if it were possible) and thou learn'st not to do well? 'Tis not thy fields being clear of weeds, but fruitful in corn, payes thy rent, and brings thee in thy profit; nor thy not being drunk, unclean, or any other sin, but thy being holy, gracious, thy having faith unfeigned, pure love, and the other graces which will prove thee sound, and bring in evidence for thy interest in Christ, and through him of Heaven.

CHAP. IV.

The weak grounds whereby tempted Souls argue against their own Uprightness.

WE proceed to the false Grounds, from which sincere Souls do many times go about to prove themselves Hypocrites, yea for a while conclude they are such.

First, Sure I am an Hypocrite, saith the poor Soul, or else I should not be as I am; God would not thus follow me on with one blow after another, and suffer Satan also to use me as he doth: This was the grand battery Job's Friends had against his Sincerity; and sometimes Satan so far prevails, as to make the sincere Soul set it against his own breast, saying much like him, *If God be with us, why is all this befallen us?* If God be in us by his grace, why appears he against us?

Ans. This fire into which God casts thee, proves thou hast dross; and if because thou art held long in the furnace, thou should'st say, thou had'st much dross, I would not oppose; but how thou should'st spell Hypocrite out of thy afflictions, and troubles, I marvel; The wicked indeed make much use of this Argument to clap Hypocrite on them; but the Christian methinks should not use it against himself; though the *Barbarians* presently gave their verdict upon sight of the Viper on *Paul's* hand, that he was a Murderer, yet *Paul* thought no worse of himself for it. Christian, give but the same counsel to thy self, when in affliction and temptation, that thou usest to do; thy fellow-brethren in the same condition, and thou wilt get out of this snare; darest thou think thy neighbour an Hypocrite, merely from the hand of God upon him? no I warrant thee, thou rather pitiest him, and helpest him to answer the doubts that arise in his Spirit from this very Argument. It would make one smile to see how handsomely and roundly a Christian can untie the knots and scruples of another; who afterward, when brought into the like condition, is gravell'd with the same himself; he that helpt his friend over the stile, is now unable to stride it himself; God so orders things that we should need one another. She that is Mid-wife to others, cannot well do that office to her self; Nor he that is the messenger to bring peace to the spirit of another, able to speak it to his own; the case is clear, Christian; affliction cannot prove thee an Hypocrite, which wert thou without altogether, thou might'st safer think thou wert a bastard; the case I say is clear, but thy eyes are held for some further end God hath to bring about by thy affliction. But may be thou wilt say, 'tis not simply the affliction makes thee think thus of thy self; but because thou art so long afflicted, and in the dark also, as to any sense of Gods love in thy soul. Thou hast no smiles from Gods sweet countenance to alleviate thy affliction, and if all were right, and thou a sincere child of God, would thy heavenly Father let thee lie groaning, and never look in upon thee, to lighten thy affliction with his sweet pre-

sence? As to the first of these, (the length of thy affliction,) I know no standard God hath set for to measure the length of his Saints crosses by; and it becomes not us to make one our selves; which we do, when we thus limit his chastisements to time, that if they exceed the day, we have writ down in our own thoughts, (which is like to be short enough, if our hasty hearts may appoint) then we are Hypocrites. For the other thou must know, God can without any impeachment to his love, hide it for a while; and truly he may take it very ill, that his Children who have security enough given them, for his loving them (besides the sensible manifestation of it to their souls) should call this in question, for not coming to visit them, and take them up in his arms when they would have him: In a word, may be thy affliction comes in the nature of purging Physick, God intends to evacuate some corruption by it, which endangers thy spiritual health, and hinders thy thriving in godliness. Now the manifestation of his love, God may reserve (as the Physicians do their Cordials) to be given when the Physick is over.

Secondly, I fear I am an Hypocrite, saith the tempted Soul; why else are there such decays and declensions to be found in me? 'tis the character of the Upright, that he goes from strength to strength, but I go backward from strength to weakness. Some Christians they are like those that we call close men in the World; if they lose any thing in their trade, and all goes not as they would have it, we are sure to hear of that over and over again; they speak of their losses in every company; but when they make a good market, and gains come in apace, they keep this to themselves, not forward to speak of them. If Christians would be ingenuous, they should tell what they get, as what they lose. But to take it for granted, that thou doest find a decay, and direct our Answer to it.

Ans. 1. I grant it as true, that the sincere Soul grows stronger and stronger; But how? even as the tree grows higher and bigger, which we know meets with a fall of the leaf, and Winter, that for a while intermits its growth; thus the sincere Soul may be put to a present stand by some temptation; as *Peter*, who was far from growing stronger when he fell from professing, to denying, from denying Christ, to swearing and cursing if he knew him; yet as the tree when Spring comes, revives and gains more in the Summer, than it loseth in the Winter; so doth the sincere Soul, as we see in *Peter*, whose grace that squatted in for a while, came forth with such a force, that no cruelty from men could drive it in ever after; shaking temptations end in settlement, according to the Apostles prayer, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of all grace, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

2. There is great difference between the decay of a sincere Soul, and of an Hypocrite. The Hypocrite declines out of an inward dislike of the ways of God; hence they are called, *Back-sliders in heart*, Prov. 14. 14. So long as they serv'd his Lust, and contributed any help to the obtaining his worldly interest, so long he had a seeming zeal; but that argument taken away, he begins to remit by degrees, till he comes to be key-cold, yea, as heartily sick of his profession as *Amnon of Tamar*; When the Hypocrite begins to fall, he goes apace, like a stone down the hill, knows no ground but the bottom; Now speak freely, poor Soul, darest thou say that there is an inward dislike to the ways of God? May be thou dost pray, not with that heat and fervency which thou hast, but is it because thou dost not like the duty as formerly? Thou dost not hear the Word with such joy, but dost thou not therefore hear it with more sorrow? In a word, canst thou not say with the Spouse, *When thou sleepest, thy heart waketh*, Cant. 5. 2. that is, thou art not pleased with thy present declining state, but heartily wishest thou wert out of it; as one that hath a great desire to rise, and be at his work (his heart is awake) but he is not able at present to shake off that sleep which binds him down; this will clear thee from being an Hypocrite.

Thirdly, I fear, faith the poor Soul, I am an Hypocrite, because I have such a divided heart in the duties I perform; I cannot for my life enjoy any privacy with God in duty, but some base lust will be crowding into my thoughts when I am at prayer, hearing of the Word, or meditating; Now I am lift up with a self-applauding thought, anon cast down to the earth with a worldly thought; what with one and another, little respite have I from such company. And do such vermine breed any where but in the dunghill of a false hypocritical heart?

Ans. Woe were it to the best of Saints, if the meer rising and stirring of such thoughts as these (or worse than these) did prove the heart unsound; take heed thou concludest not thy state therefore from the presence of these in thee, but from the comportment and behaviour of thy heart towards them. Answer therefore to these few Interrogatories, and possibly thou mayest see thy sincerity through the mist these have raised in the Soul.

First, What friendly welcome have such thoughts with thee, when they present themselves to thee in duty? Are these the guests thou hast expected, and trimmed thy room for? Didst go to duty to meet those friends, or do they unmannerly break in upon thee, and forcibly carry thee (as Christ foretold of *Peter* in another case) whither thou wouldst not? If so, why shouldst thou bring thy sincerity into dispute? Dost thou not know the Devil is a bold intruder, and dares come where he knows there is none will bid him sit down, and that Soul alone he can call his own house, where he finds rest? *Luke 12. 24.* Suppose in your family, as you are kneeling down to prayer, a company of Roysters should stand under your window, and all the while you are praying, they would be roaring and hollowing, this could not but much disturb you; but would you from the di-

sturbance they make, fall to question your sincerity in the duty? Truly 'tis all one, whether the disturbance be in the room, or in the bosome, so the Soul likes the one no more than he doth the other.

Secondly, Dost thou sit contented with this company, or use all the means thou canst to get rid of them, as soon as may be? Sincerity cannot sit still, to see such doings in the Soul, but as a faithful Servant, when thieves break into his Masters house, though over-powered with their strength and multitude, that he cannot with his own hands thrust them out of doors, yet he will send out secretly for help, and raise the Town upon them; Prayer is the sincere Souls messenger, it posts to Heaven with full speed in this case, counting it self to be no other than in the belly of Hell with *Jonah*, while it is yoked with such thoughts, and as glad when aid comes to rescue him out of their hands, as *Lor* was when *Abraham* recovered him from the Kings that had carried him away Prisoner.

Fourthly, But may be thou wilt say, Though thou darest not deny, that thy cry is sent to Heaven against them, yet thou hearest no news of the Prayer, but continuest still pestered with them as before, which encreaseth thy fear, that thy heart is naught, or else thy Prayer would have been answered, and thou delivered from those Inmates.

Ans. Paul might as well have said so, when he besought the Lord thrice, but could not have the thorn in his flesh pluck'd out, *2 Cor. 12. 8.* He doth not by this shew thee to be an Hypocrite, but givest thee a fair advantage of proving thy self sincere, not much unlike his dealing with the *Israelites*, before whom he did not (as they expected) hastily drive out the Nations, but left them as thorns in their sides; and why? hear the reason from Gods own mouth, *Judges 2. 22.* *That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their Fathers did keep it, or not.* Thus God leaves these corruptions in thee, to prove, whether thou wilt at last fall in and be friends with them, or maintain the conflict with them, and continue praying against them, by which perseverance thou wilt prove thy self to be indeed upright. A false heart will never do this. He is soon answered, that doth not cordially desire the thing he asks. The Hypocrite, when he prays against his corruption, goes of his consciences errand, not his wills; just as a Servant, that doth not like the message his Master sends him about, but dares not displease him, and therefore goes, and may be knocks at the mans door whither he is sent, yet very faintly, loth he should hear him; all that he doth, is, that he may but bring a fair tale to his Master, by saying he was there; even so prays the Hypocrite, only to stop the mouth of his conscience with this flim, that he hath prayed against his lust; glad he is when 'tis over, and more glad that he returns *re-infecta*. Observe therefore the behaviour of thy heart in prayer, and judge thy self sincere, or not sincere by that, not by the present success it hath. God can take it kindly that thou askest, what at present he thinks better to deny than give. Thou wouldst have all thy corruptions knock'd down at one blow, and

and thy heart in a posture to do the work of thy God without any stop, or rub from lust within, or Devil without; would'st thou not? God highly approves of your zeal, as he did of *David's*, who had a mind to build him a Temple, but as he thought not fit that the House should in *David's* time be reared (reserving it for the peaceful reign of *Solomon*) so neither doth he, that this thy request should be granted in this life, having reserv'd this immunity as an especial part of the Charter of the City that is above, which none but glorified Saints, who are inhabitants there, enjoy; he hath indeed taught us to pray (let thy will be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven) but we must expect the full answer to it when we come there. But learn therefore poor Soul, to take this denial as *David* did his; because God would not let him build the House in his days, he did not therefore question the love and favour of God, neither did he desist from preparing materials for it; but did what he might towards it, though he might not what he would; far be it from thee also, that thou shouldst for this either cast away thy confidence on God, or lay aside thy endeavour for God, in mortifying thy corruptions, and adding to the store thou hast at present of his graces, which (though now imperfect, and unpolish'd) he will make use of in the Heavenly building which he intends thee for, where all the broken pieces (as I may so say) of our weak graces shall be so improved by the power and wisdom of God, that they shall make up one glorious structure of perfect holiness, more to be admired by Angels in Heaven, for the rare workmanship of it, than *Solomon's* Temple was on Earth by men, when in its full glory.

Fifthly, Oh but, saith the tempted Soul, I have sometimes inward checks from my own Conscience, that this duty I did hypocritically, and in that action there was much falseness of heart discovered it self, and if my heart condemn me, how can it be otherwise, but I must needs be an Hypocrite?

Ans. I shall help to resolve this, by laying down two distinctions, and applying them to the case in hand.

First, We must distinguish between Conscience proceeding by a right rule in its judgement, and Conscience proceeding by a false rule.

Secondly, Between a Conscience that goes by a right rule, and is also rightly inform'd how to use it; and a Conscience that judgeth by a right rule, but is not rightly informed in its use. First, to apply the first.

First, Then Conscience proceeds by a right rule, when it grounds its charge upon the Word of God; for, being but an under-officer, it is bound up to a Law by which it must proceed; and that can be no other than what God appoints it, who gives it commission, and puts it in office; and that is the Word of God, and that only; So that we are to give credit to our Conscience, commanding or forbidding, condemning or acquitting us, when it can shew its warrant from the Word of God for these; otherwise as subjects that are wronged in an inferior Court, and cannot have justice there, may appeal

higher; so may and ought we from conscience to the Word of God. And you must know Conscience is a faculty that is corrupted as much as any other by nature, and is very oft made use of by Satan, to deceive both good and bad, godly and ungodly. Many that know their Consciences (they say) speak peace to them, will be found merely cheated and gull'd, when the Books shall be open'd; no such discharge will then be found entred in the Book of the Word, as Conscience hath put into their hand. And many gracious Souls, who pass their days in a continual fear of their spiritual state, and were kept chain'd in the dark dungeon of a troublesome Conscience, shall then be acquitted, and have their action against Satan for false imprisonment, and accusing their Consciences to the disturbing their peace. And now let me ask thee poor Soul, who sayest, thy Conscience checks thee for an Hypocrite; art thou a convicted Hypocrite by the Word? doth Conscience shew thee a word from Christs Law, that proves thee so? or rather doth not Satan abuse thy own fearfulness, and play upon the tenderness of thy spirit, which is so deeply possessed with the sense of thy sins, that thou art ready to believe any motion in thee, that tells any evil of thee? I am sure it is oft so; the fears and checks which some poor Souls have in their bosomes, are like those reports that are now and then raised of some great news, by such as have a mind to abuse the Countrey; A talk and murmur you shall have in every mans mouth of it, but go about to follow it to the Spring head, and you can find no ground of it, or Author of credit that will vouch it. Thus here, a bruit there is in the tempted Christians bosome, and a noise heard as it were continually whispering in his ears, *I am an Hypocrite, my heart is naught*; all I do is dissembling; but when the poor creature in earnest sets upon the search, to find out the business, calls his Soul to the bar, and falls to examine it upon those interrogatories, which the Word propounds for tryal of our Sincerity, he can fasten this charge from none of them all upon himself; and at last comes to find it but a false Alarm of Hell, given out to put him to some trouble and affrightment for the present, though not hurt him in the end; like the Politicians lye, which though it be found false at last, yet doth them some service the time it is believed for true. As one serious question, such as this, seriously put to a gross Hypocrite, is able to make him speechless; what promise in all the Bible hast thou on thy side for thy Salvation? so it is enough to deliver the troubled Soul from his fears of being an Hypocrite, if he would but as *David*, ask his Soul a Scripture reason for his disquietments; *Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* The sincere Soul hath firm ground for his Faith at bottom, however a little dirt is cast by Satan over it, to make him afraid of venturing to set his foot on it.

Secondly, We must distinguish between a Conscience rightly informed, and a Conscience misinformed. A Conscience may be regular, so as to choose the right rule, but not rightly inform'd how

to use this rule in his particular case. Indeed, in the Saints trouble of spirit, Conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict; but very ill interpreted; O faith the poor Soul, this place is against me, *Psalms 32. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere Soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I find much guile in me, therefore I am not the Sincere one: Now this is a very weak, yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisy remaining in his heart; this is such a one, as none since the Fall (but Christ himself) was ever found walking in mortal flesh. To be without sin, and to be without guile, in this strict sense are the same; A Prerogative here on Earth peculiar to the Lord Christ, *2 Pet. 2. 22. who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the Saints, as to *Levi, Malachi 2. 6. Iniquity was not found in his lips.* And to *Nathanael, Joh. 1. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile:* We must sense it in an inferiour way, that may suit with their imperfect state here below, and not put that which only was Christ's Crown on Earth, and is the glorified Saints robe in Heaven, to wear on the weak Christian while militant on Earth, not only with a Devil without, but a body of sin within him. Wipe thine eyes again (poor Soul) and then, if thou readest such places, wherein the Spirit of Gods speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his Saints grace, thou shalt find he doth not allert the perfection of their grace (free from all mixture of sin) but rather to comfort

poor drooping Souls, and cross their mis-giving hearts (which from the presence of hypocrisy are ready to over-look their Sincerity as none at all) he expresseth his high esteem of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisy none at all. O Christian, thy God would have thee know that thou doest not more over-look thy little grace for fear of the hypocrisy thou findest mingled with it, than he doth thy great corruptions, for the dear love he bears to the little yet true grace he sees amidst them. *Abraham* loved and owned his kinsman *Lot* when a prisoner, carried away by those *Heathen Kings*; so does thy God thy grace (near in blood to him) when sadly yoked by the enemy in thy own bosome; and for thy comfort know, when the Books shall be opened, the Word, and also that of thy own Conscience in the great day of Christ, Christ will be the Interpreter of both; Not the sense which thou hast in the distemper of thy troubled Soul (when thou readest both with Satans gloss) put upon them, shall stand; But what Christ shall say; and to be sure he hath already declared himself so great a friend to weak grace, when on Earth, by his loving converse with his Disciples, and free testimony he gave to his grace in them (when God knows they were but raw and weak Christians, both as to their knowledge and practice) that (poor Soul) thou need'st not fear, he will then and there condemn; what here he commended and so dearly embraced. Yea, he that took most care for his little Lambs how they might be used gently, when he was to go from them to Heaven, will not be unkind himself to them at his return warrant thee.

CHAP. XII.

Four Characters of Truth of heart or Sincerity.

HAVING broke the flattering Glasses wherein Hypocrites use to look, till they fall in love with their own painted faces, and conceit themselves Sincere; as also those which disfigure the sweet countenance and natural Beauty of the sincere Soul, so as to make it bring the grace of God, which shines on it, into question; I now proceed to draw a few lineaments, and lay down some undoubted Characters of this Truth of heart, and godly Sincerity, whereby we may have the better advantage of stating every one in his own condition.

SECT. I.

First, A sincere heart is a new heart; hypocrisy is call'd the old leaven, *1 Cor. 5. 7. purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.* Dough once sowed with leaven will never lose the taste of it; Neither will corrupt nature cease to be hypocritical, till it cease to be corrupt nature; either the heart must be made new, or it will have

its old quality; there may be some art used to conceal it, and take away its unfavouriness from others for a while; as flowers and perfumes cast about a rotten carcass may do its scent; yet both the rotten carcass and the corrupt heart remain the same. They say of the *Peacock*, that roost him as much as you will, yet his flesh (when cold) will be raw again; truly thus let a carnal heart do what it please, force upon it self never such an high strain of seeming Piety, so that it appears fire-hot with zeal, yet stay a little, and it will come to its old complexion, and discover it self to be but what it was, naught and false; one heart, and a new heart, both are Covenant-mercies, yea, so promised, that the new is promised in order to the making of the heart one, *Ezek. 11. 9. I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit in you, and I will take away the stony heart, &c.* God promiseth he will give them one spirit, that is, a sincere spirit to God and man; contrary to a divided heart, a heart and a heart, the mark of hypocrisy. But how will he give it? he tells them, *I will give you a new spirit, and how will*

will he do that? *I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh*; upon which words one very well thus glosseth, I will give you *one heart*, which that I may so do, I will cast it *anew*; and that I may do this also, I will *melt and soften it*; as one that having many pieces of old silver, or plate lying by him, which he intends to put into one bowl, he first resolves to cast it anew, and to that end throws it into the fire to melt, and so at last shuts up all in one piece. Indeed by nature mans heart is a very divided broken thing, scatter'd and parcell'd out, a piece to this creature, and a piece to that lust. One while this vanity hires him (as *Leah* did *Jacob* of *Rachel*) anon when he hath done some drudgery for that, he lets out himself to another; thus divided is man and his affections: Now, the Elect (whom God hath decreed to be vessels of honour, consecrated for his holy use and service) he throws into the fire of his Word, that being there softened and melted, he may by his transforming Spirit cast them anew, as it were into a holy Oneness; so that he who before was divided from God, and lost among the creatures, and his lusts (that shared him among them) now his heart is gathered in to God from them all; it looks with a single eye on God, and acts for him in all that he doth; if therefore thou wouldst know, whether thy heart be sincere, enquire whether it be thus made new. Hath God thrown thee into his furnace? Did ever his Word, like fire, take hold upon thee, so as to soften thy hard heart, and melt thy drossie spirit, that thou now seest that desperate hypocrisie, pride, unbelief, and the like, which before lay hid, like dross in the metal, before the fire finds it out? And not only seest it, but seest it sever and separate from thy Soul, that thou who before didst bless thy self as in a good condition, now bewailest thy folly for it, heartily confessing what an unfavoury creature thou wert to God in all thou didst; the things which appear'd so gaudy and fair in thy eye, thy civil righteousness, keeping the Church, slubbering over a few duties in thy family, that for them thou thoughtst Heaven was as it were in mortgage to thee: dost thou lament to think how thou didst mock God with these hypocritical Pageants abroad, while thy lusts were entertain'd within doors in thy bosome, there sucking the heart-blood of thy dearest affections? In a word, canst thou say, that thou art not only melted into sorrow for these, but that thou findest thy heart (which was so divided and distracted betwixt lusts and creatures) now united to fear the Name of God? Hast thou but one design, that above all thou pursuest, and that to approve thy self to God, though with the displeasing of all beside? One love, how thou maist love Christ, and be beloved of him? If the streams of thy affections be thus (by the mighty power of God renewing thee) gathered into this one channel, and with a sweet violence run this way, then blessed art thou of the Lord; thou art the sincere Soul in his account, though much corruption be found in thee still, that is soiling thy stream, and endeavouring to stop the free course of thy Soul Godwards; this may put thee to some trouble, as the mountains and rocks do the river-water running to

the Sea, causing some windings and turnings in its course, which else would go the nearest way, even in a direct line to it; so thy remaining corruptions may now and then put thee out of thy way of obedience; but sincerity will (like the water) on its journey for all this, and never leave till it bring thee (though with some compass) to thy God, whom thou hast so imprinted in thy heart, as he can never be forgot by thee. But if thou never hadst the hypocrisie of thy heart thus discovered, and made hateful to thee, nor a new principle put into thy bosome, to turn the tyde of thy Soul contrary to the natural fall of thy affections; only thou from the good opinion which thou hast of thy self (because of some perty flourish thou makest in profession) takest it for granted thou art sincere, and thy heart true, I dare pronounce thee an unclean Hypocrite; the World may Saint thee possibly, but thou wilt never (as thou art) be so in Gods account; when thou hast tricked and spruced up thy self never so finely into the fashion of a Christian, still thou wilt have but a Saints face, and an Hypocrites heart. It is no matter what is the sign, though an Angel, that hangs without, if the Devil and sin dwell within. New trimming upon an old garment will not make it new, only give it a new shape; and truly it is no good husbandry to bestow a great deal of cost in fining up an old Suit, that will drop in a while to tatters and rags, when a little more might purchase a new one, that is lasting. And is it not better to labour to get a new heart, that all thou dost may be accepted, and thou saved, than to lose all the pains thou takest in Religion, and thy self also for want of it?

SECT. II.

Secondly, A sincere heart is a plain heart, a simple heart *sine plicis*, a heart without folds; the Hypocrite is of the Serpents brood, he can (as the Serpent) shrink up, or let out himself for his advantage, unwilling to expose himself much to the knowledge of others; and he has reason so to do, for he knows he hath most credit where he is least known: The Hypocrite is one that *digs deep to hide his counsel*, *Esay* 29. 15. *Their heart is deep*, *Psal.* 64. 6. Their meaning and intent of heart lies no body knows how far distant from their words; A sincere heart is like a clear stream in a brook; you may see to the bottom of his plots in his words, and take the measure of his heart by his tongue. I have heard say, that diseases of the heart are seen in spots of the tongue; but the Hypocrite can shew a clear tongue, and yet have a foul heart; He that made that Proverb, *Loquere ut te videam*, *Speak that I may see you*, did not think of the Hypocrite, who will speak that you shall not see him: The thickest cloud that he hath to wrap up his villany in, are his religious tongue, and fandy profession. Wouldst thou know, whether thou hast a true heart in thy bosome? Look if thou hast a plain dealing heart; see them joyn'd, *2 Cor.* 1. 12. *Paul* and the rest of the faithful messengers of Christ, had their conversation among the *Corinthians*, in *simplicity and godly sincerity*. They had no close box in

in the Cabinet of their hearts, in which they cunningly kept any thing conceal'd from them of their designs, as the false Apostles did. Now this plain-dealing of the sincere heart appears in these three particulars.

First, A sincere heart deals plainly with it self, and that in two things chiefly.

First, In searching and ransacking its own self; this it doth to its utmost skill and power. It will not be put off with pretences, or such a mannerly excuse as Rachel gave to Laban, when at the same time she sat brooding on his Idols. No, an account it will have of the Soul, and that such a one, as may enable it to give a good account to God, upon whose warrant it does its office; O the fear which such a one shews, lest any lust should scape its eye, and lye hid (as Saul in the stuff) or that any the least grace of God should be trodden on regardlessly by belying or denying it! When David found his thoughts of God (which used to recreate him, and be his most pleasing company,) occasion some trouble in his spirit, Psal. 77. 3. *I thought on God, and was troubled;* this holy man (wondering what the matter should be) do but see what a privy search he makes; he hunts backwards and forwards, what Gods former dealings had been, and communes with his heart, and makes diligent search there, verse 6. never gives over till he brings it to an issue; and finding the disturber of his peace to be in himself, he is not so tender of his reputation, as to think of smothering the business, or smoothing it over; but attaches the thief, indites his sin, and confesseth the fact to the justifying of God, whom before he had hard thoughts of, ver. 20. *And I said, this is my infirmity.* As if he had said, Lord, now I see the *Jonas* that caused the storm in my bosome, and made me so uncomfortable in my affliction all this while; 'tis this unbelief of mine, that bowed me down to attend so to the sorrow and sense of my present affliction, that it would not suffer me to look up to former experiences; and so while I forgot them, I thought unworthily of thee; here was an honest plain-dealing Soul indeed; what a kin art thou O man to holy David? Is this thy way in searching of thy Soul? Dost thou do it in earnest, as if thou wert searching for a murderer hid in thy house, as willing to find out thy sin, as ever Papist in Queen Maries days was to find Protestants, whom to discover, they would run their Swords and Forks into Beds and Hay-mows, lest they should be there? Or when thou goest about this work, art thou loth to look too far, lest thou shouldst see what thou wouldst willingly over-look, or afraid to stay too long, lest Conscience should make an unpleasing report to thee? *Tertullian* said of the Heathen persecutors, *noluerunt audire, quod auditum damnare non possent*; they would not let the Christians be heard, because they could not then easily have had the face to condemn them, their cause would have appear'd so just; the contrary here is true, the Hypocrite dares not put his state upon a fair tryal, because then he could not handsomely escape condemning himself. But the sincere Soul is so zealous to know its true state, that when

he hath done his utmost himself to find it out, and upon this privy search his Conscience clears him, yet he contents not himself here, but jealous lest self-love might blind his eyes, and occasion too favourable a report from his Conscience, he calls in help from Heaven, and puts himself upon Gods review, Psal. 139. 21. *Do not I hate them that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee?* ver. 22. His own Conscience answers to it: *I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* Yet David not wholly satisfied with his own single testimony, calls out to God, verse 23. *Search me O God, and know my heart; see if there be any wicked way in me;* and wife Physicians will not trust their own judgements about the state of their own health, nor sincere Christians themselves about their Souls welfare; 'tis God that they attend to; his judgement alone concludes and determines them; when they have pray'd, and open'd their case to him (with David) they listen what he will say; therefore you shall find them putting themselves under the most searching Ministry, from which they never come more pleased, than when their Consciences are strip naked, and their hearts exposed to their view, as the Woman of Samaria, who commended the Sermon, and Christ that preach'd it, for this unto her neighbours, that he had told her all that ever she had done, John 4. 29. whereas a false heart likes not to hear of that ear; he thinks the Preacher commits a trespass, when he comes upon his ground, and comes up close to his Conscience; and if he could, he would have an Action against him for it. This stuck in Herod's stomach, that John should lay his finger on his sore place; though he fear'd him being conscious, yet he never loved him, and therefore was soon perswaded to cut off his head, which had so bold a tongue in it, that durst reprove his incestuous bed.

Secondly, The true heart shews its plain dealing with it self, as in searching, so in judging it self, when once testimony comes in clear against it, and Conscience tells: Soul, in this duty thou betrayedst pride, in that affliction, forwardness and impatience; such a one is not long before it proceeds to judgement; and this it doth with so much vehemency and severity, that it plainly appears, zeal for God (whom he hath dishonoured) makes him forget all self-pity; he layes about him in humbling and abasing himself, as the sons of Levi in executing justice on their brethren, who knew neither brother nor sister in that act; truly such an Heroick act is this of the sincere Soul judging it self; he is so transported and clothed with a holy fury against his Sin, that he is deaf to the cry of flesh and blood, which would move him to think of a more favourable sentence. *I have sinn'd* (saith David) *against the Lord*, 2 Sam. 12. in another place, *I have sinn'd greatly, and done very foolishly*, 2 Sam. 24. in a third, he, as unworthy of a mans name, takes beault to himself, *so foolish was I and ignorant, as a beast before thee*, Psal. 73. 22. But a false heart, if Conscience checks him for this or that, and he perceives by this inward murmur in his bosome, which way

way the cause will go, if he proceeds fairly on to put himself upon the tryal; the Court is sure to be broke up, and all put off to another hearing, which is like to be at leisure; so that as witnesses with delays and many put-offs, grow at last weary of the work, and will rather stay at home, than make their appearance to little purpose; so Conscience ceaseth to give evidence where it cannot be heard, or when heard, can have no judgement against the offender.

Secondly, A true heart is plain as with it self, so with God also; several wayes this might appear; take one for all; and that is in his petitions, and requests at the Throne of grace; The Hypocrite in prayer juggles, he asks what he would not thank God to give him; there is a myserie of iniquity in his praying against iniquity. Now this will appear in these two particulars, whether we be plain-hearted in our requests or not.

First, Observe whether thou beest deeply afflicted in spirit, when thy request is not answered, or regard'st not what success it hath; Suppose it be a sin thou prayest against, or some Grace thou prayest for; what is thy temper all the while thy messenger staves, especially if it be long? Thou prayest, and corruption abates not, grace grows not; now thy Hypocrisie or Sincerity will appear; if sincere, every moment will be an hour, every hour a day, a year till thou hearest some news from Heaven; Hope deferred will make the heart sick: Doth not the sick man that sends for a Physician, think long for his coming? O he is afraid his messenger should miss of him, or that he will not come with him, or that he shall dye before he bring his Physick; a thousand fears disturb him, and make him passionately wish he were there; thus the sincere Soul passeth those hours with a sad heart, that it lives without a return of its request; I am a woman (said Hannah to Eli) of a sorrowful spirit, 1 Sam. 1. 15. and why so? Alas, she had from year to year prayed to God, and no answer was yet come: Thus saith the Soul, I am one of a bitter spirit, I have pray'd for a soft heart, a believing heart many a day and moneth, but 'tis not come; I am afraid I was not sincere in the business, could my request so long have hung in the Clouds else? Such a Soul is full of fears and troubles; like a Merchant that hath a rich Ship at Sea, who cannot sleep on Land, till he sees her, or hears of her; but, if when thou hast sent up thy prayer, thou canst cast off the care and thoughts of the business, as if praying were only like Childrens scribbling over pieces of paper, which when they have done, they lay aside and think no more of them: If thou canst take denials at Gods hands for such things as these, and be blank no more than a cold suitor doth, when he hears not from her whom he never really loved, it breaks not thy rest, embitters not thy joy, a false heart set thee on work. And take heed, that instead of answering thy prayer, God doth not answer the secret desire of thy heart; which should he do, thou art undone for ever.

Secondly, Observe whether thou usest the means to obtain that which thou prayest God to give

A false heart sits still it self, while it sets God on work; like him, that when his Cart was set in a slough, cried, *Jupiter help*, but would not put his own shoulder to the wheel; if corruptions may be mortified, and kill'd for him, as *Goliath* was for the *Israelites*, (he like them, looking on, and not put to strike stroke) so it is; but for any encounter with them, or putting himself to the trouble of using any means to obtain the victory, he is so eaten up with sloth and cowardize, that it is as grievous he thinks, as to sit still in slavery and bondage to them. But a sincere Soul is conscientiously laborious. *Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto the Lord*, Lam. 3. 41. that is, saith *Bernard*, *oremus & laboremus*, Let us pray and use the endeavour; the Hypocrites tongue wags, but the sincere Souls feet walk, and hands work.

Thirdly, The sincere Soul discovers its plainness and simplicity to men. We had our conversation among you (saith Paul to the *Corinthians*) in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom. The Christian is one that cannot subject his heart to his head, his conscience to his policy; he commits himself to God in well-doing, and fears not others; if he be not conscious to himself; and therefore he dares not make a hole in his conscience to keep his skin whole, but freely and openly voucheth God without dissembling his profession: while the Hypocrite shifts his sails, and puts forth such Colours as his policy and worldly interest adviseth; if the Coast be clear, and no danger at hand, he'll appear as religious as any; but no sooner he makes discovery of any hazard it may put to him, but he tacks about, and shapes another course, making no bones of juggling with God and man; he counts that his right road, which leads to his temporal safety: But quite contrary the upright, Prov. 16. 17. *The high-way of the upright is to depart from evil*. This is the road that this true traveller jogs on in; and if he be at any time seen out of it, 'tis upon no other account, than a man that hath unwillingly lost his way, never quiet till he strike into it again.

SECT. III.

Uniformity

Thirdly, The sincere true-hearted Christian is Uniform. As Truth in the Doctrine differs in this from its opposite, that it is one, error diverse; there is no harmony among errors, as among truths; so truth of heart, or sincerity, is known from hypocrisie by the same character. Indeed truth in the heart is but the copy and transcript of the other; they agree as the face in the glass doth with the face in the man that looks in it, or as the image in the wax, with the sculpture in the seal, from which it is derived; therefore if truth in the Word be uniform and harmonious, then truth in the heart, which is nothing but the impression of that there must also be so. A sincere Christian in the tenure of his course is like himself, *vir unum coloris*, of one colour, not like your changeable stuffs, so dyed, that you may by waving of them divers ways, see divers colours.

Gg

There

There is a three-fold uniformity in the sincere Christians obedience; he is uniform, *quoad obiectum, subiectum & circumstantias obedientiae*; as to the object, subject, and several circumstances that accompany his obedience.

First, As to the *Object*, the Hypocrite indeed is in with one duty, and out with another: like a globous body, he toucheth the Law of God in one point, (some particular command he seems zealous for) but meets not in the rest; whereas the sincere heart lyes close to the whole Law of God in his desire and endeavour. The upright mans foot is said to stand in an even place, Psal. 26. 11. he walks not haltingly and uncomely; as those who go in unequal wayes, which are hobbling, and up and down; or those whose feet and legs are not even, (as Solomon saith) *the legs of the lame are not even*, and so cannot stand in an even place, because one is long, and the other short; the sincere mans feet are even, and legs of a length (as I may say) his care alike conscientious to the whole Will of God. The Hypocrite, like the *Badger*, hath one foot shorter than another; or like a foundred *Horse*, he doth not stand as we say, right off. all four; one foot at least you shall perceive he favours, loth to put it down. The *Pharisees* pretended much zeal to the first Table, they pray'd and fasted in an extraordinary manner; but they pray'd for their prey; and when they had fasted all day, they sup at the poor Widows cost, her house they mean to devour. A sad Fast, that ends in Oppression, and only serves to get them a ravenous appetite, to swallow others Estates under a pretence of Devotion. The Moralist, he is very punctual in his dealings with men, but very thievish in his carriage to God; though he will not wrong his Neighbour of a farthing, he sticks not to rob GOD of greater matters; his love, fear, faith are due debt to God, but he makes no conscience of paying them. It is ordinary in Scripture to describe a Saint, a godly person by a particular duty, a single grace; sometimes his Character is, *one that feareth an oath*, Eccles. 9. 2. sometimes one that loves the Brethren, 1 John 3. 14. and so of the rest; and why? but because where-ever one duty is conscientiously performed, the heart stands ready for another. As God hath enacted all his commands with the same authority, (wherefore 'tis said, *God spake all these words*, Exod. 20. 1. one as well as the other.) So God insueth all grace together, and writes not one particular Law in the heart of his Children, but the whole Law, which is an universal principle, entlining the Soul impartially to all; so that if thou likest not all, thou art sincere in none.

Secondly, The sincere Christian is uniform, *quoad subiectum*; the whole man (so far as renewed) moves one way; all the powers and faculties of the Soul joyn forces, and have a sweet accord together; when the understanding makes discovery of a truth, then conscience improves her utmost authority on the will, commanding it in the Name of God (whose Officer it is) to entertain it; the will so soon as conscience knocks, opens her self, and lets it in; the affections like dutiful hand-maids, seeing it a guest

welcome to the will, (their Mistress) express their readiness to wait on it, as becomes them in their places. But in the Hypocrite it is not so; there one faculty fights against another; never are they all found to conspire and meet in a friendly vote; when there is light in the understanding, the man knows this truth and that duty; then oft conscience is brib'd for executing its office, it doth not so much as check him for the neglect of it: Truth stands as it were before the Soul, and Conscience will not so much befriend it, as to knock and rouse up the soul to let it in; if conscience be overcome to plead its cause, and shews some activity in pressing for entertainment, it is sure either to have a churlish denial, with a frown for its pains, in being so bule to bring such an unwelcome guest with it; as the forward Wife doth by her Husband, when he brings home with him one she doth not like, or else a feigned entertainment, the more subtilly to hide the secret enmity it hath against it.

Thirdly, *Quoad circumstantias obedientiae*. The sincere Soul is uniform as to the circumstances of his obedience and holy walking; such as are time, place, and company, and manner; he is uniform as to time, his Religion is not like a holy-day suit, put on only at set times; but come to him when you will, you shall find him clad alike, holy on the *Lord-day*, and holy on the *week-day* too, Psal. 106. 3. *Blessed are they that keep judgement, and he that doth righteousness at all times*; 'tis a sign it is not a merry complexion, when the colour he hath while he is by a fire dyes away soon after. There are some if you would see their goodness, and be acquainted with their godliness, you must hit the right time, or else you will find none, like some flowers that are seen but some moneths in the year; or like some Physicians, that they call fore-noon men, they that would speak with them to any purpose, must come in the morning, because commonly they are drunk in the afternoon; thus, may be in the morning, you may take the Hypocrite on his knees, in a Saints posture, but when that fit is over, you shall see little of God in all his course, till night brings him again of course to the like duty. The Watch is naught, that goes only at first winding up, and stands all the day after, and so is that heart sure, that desires not always to keep in spiritual motion. I confess, there may be a great difference in the standing of two Watches; one from the very Watch it self, because it hath not the right make, and this will ever do so till alter'd; another possibly is true work, only some dust clogs the wheels, or fall hath a little batter'd it, which removed, it will go well again. And there is as great difference between the sincere Soul and Hypocrite in this case; the sincere Soul may be interrupted in its spiritual motion, and Christian course, but it is from some temptation that at present clogs him, but he hath a new nature which enclines to a constant motion in holiness, and doth upon removing the present impediment, return to its natural exercise of godliness; but the Hypocrite fails in the very constitution and frame of his spirit; he hath not a principle of grace in him to keep him moving.

Again,

Again, The sincere Christian is uniform, as to place and company: where-ever he goes he carries his rule with him, which squares him: within doors amidst his nearest relations, *David's resolve* is his, *Psal. 101. 2. He will walk within his house with a perfect heart*; follow him abroad, he carries his conscience with him, and doth not bid it (as *Abraham* his servants, when ascending the Mount) to stay behind till he comes back. The *Romans* had a Law, that every one should where-ever he went, wear a badge of his trade in his hat, or outward vestment, that he might be known. The sincere Christian never willingly lays aside the badge of his holy profession. No place nor company turns him out of the way that is called holy. Indeed his conscience doth not make him fore-do his prudence; he knows how to distinguish of place and place, company and company; and therefore when cast among boisterous lingers, and scornful ones, he doth not betray Religion to scorn, by throwing his pearls before such as would trample on them, and rent him; yet he is very careful, lest his prudence should put his uprightness to any hazard. *I will behave my self wisely* (saith *David* in the fore-named *Psal. 101*) *in a perfect way*; that is, I will shew my self as wise as I can, so I may also be upright. Truly that place and company is like the *Torrid Zone*, uninhabitable to a gracious Soul, where prophaneness is so hot, that sincerity cannot look out and shew it self, by seasonable counsel and reproof, with safety to the Saint; and therefore they that have neither so much zeal to protect against the sins of such, nor so much care of themselves, as to withdraw from thence, where they can only receive evil, and do no good, have just cause to call their sincerity into question.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The sincere Christian is progressive, never at his journeys end, till he gets to Heaven; this keeps him always in motion, advancing in his desires and endeavours forward; he is thankful for little grace, but not content with great measures of grace: *When I awake, saith David, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness*, *Psal. 17. 15.* he had many a sweet entertainment at the house of God in his Ordinances: The Spirit of God was the messenger that brought him many a covered dish from Gods table,

inward consolations which the World knew not of: yet *David* has not enough, 'tis Heaven alone that can give him his full draught. They say the *Gauls*, when they first tasted of the Wines of *Italy*, were so taken with their lusciousness and sweetness, that they could not be content to trade thither for this Wine, but resolved they would conquer the Land where they grew. Thus the sincere Soul thinks it not enough to receive a little now and then of grace and comfort from Heaven, by trading and holding commerce at a distance with God in his Ordinances here below, but projects and meditates a conquest of that holy Land, and blessed place from whence such rich commodities come, that he may drink the Wine of that Kingdom in that Kingdom. This raiseth the Soul to high and noble enterprizes, how it may attain to further degrees of grace every day than other, and so climb nearer and nearer Heaven. He that aims at the Sky, shoots higher than he that means only to hit a tree. *I press* (saith *Paul*) *toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, *Phil. 3. 13.* Others admired *Paul's* attainments, (O that they had *Paul's* grace, and then they should be happy!) but he would count himself very unhappy, if he might have no more; he professeth he hath not apprehended what he runs for; the prize stands not in the mid-way, but at the end of the race, and therefore he puts on with full speed, yea, makes it the tryal of uprightness in all, *ver. 15.* *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect* (that is, sincere) *be thus minded.* 'Tis the Hypocrite that stints himself in the things of God. A little knowledge he would have, that may help him to discourse of Religion among the Religious: and for more, he leaves it as more fitting for the Preacher than himself. Some outward formalities he likes, and makes use of in profession, as attendance on publick Ordinances, and sins which would make him stink among his Neighbours, he forbears; but as for pressing into more inward and nearer communion with God in Ordinances, labouring to get his heart more spiritual, the whole body of sin more and more mortified, this was never his design. Like some slighty tradesman, that never durst look so high as to think of being rich, but thinks it well enough, if he can but hold his Shop-doors open, and keep himself out of the Jayl, though with a thousand shifting tricks.

CHAP. XIII.

A word of Direction to those who upon tryal are found unsound and false-hearted.

HAVING laid down Characters of the sincere heart, it will be necessary to make some improvement of them, as the report shall be that Conscience makes in your bosomes, upon putting your selves to the tryal of your spiritual states by the same. Now the report that Conscience makes after examination of your selves by those Notes prefixed, will amount to one of these three Inferences: Either it will condemn thee for an Hypocrite; or pronounce

thee a sincere Christian; or, thirdly, bring in an *Ignoramus*, and leave thee in doubt, whether thou beest sincere or not. That I may therefore find thee, Reader, at one door, if I miss thee at another, I shall speak severally to all three.

First, To such who upon the tryal are cast; Evidence comes in so clear and strong against them, that their Conscience cannot hold, but tell them plainly, if these be the marks of Sincerity, then they are Hypocrites.

Pocrites. The improvement I would make of this Tryal for your sakes, is to give a word of Counsel what in this case you are to do, that you may become sincere.

First, Get thy heart deeply affected with thy present dismal state. No hope of cure, till thou beest chafed into some sense and feeling of thy deplored condition. *Physick* cannot be given so long as the Patient is asleep; and it is the nature of this disease to make the Soul heavy-eyed, and dispose it to a kind of slumber of Conscience, by reason of the flattering thoughts the Hypocrite hath of himself, from some formalities he performs above others in Religion, which fume up from his deceived heart (like so many pleasing vapours from the stomach to the head) and bind up his spiritual senses into a kind of stupidity, yea, cause many pleasing dreams to entertain him with vain hopes and false joys, which vanish as soon as he wakes and comes to himself. The *Pharisees*, the most notorious Hypocrites of their age, how fast asleep were they in pride and carnal confidence, despising all the World in comparison of themselves, not afraid to commend themselves to God; yea, prefer themselves before others, *God I thank thee, I am not like this Publican*: as if they would tell God, they did look to find some more respect from him than others (so far beneath them) had at his hand? Therefore Christ in his dealing with this proud generation of men, useth an unusual strain of speech: his voice which to others was still and soft, is heard like Thunder breaking out of the Clouds when he speaks to them; how many dreadful claps have we almost together in the same Chapter fall on their heads, out of the mouth of our meek and sweet Saviour, *Mat. 23. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees*, no less than eight Woes doth Christ discharge upon them, as so many case-shot together, that by multiplying the woes, he might shew, not only the certainty of the Hypocrites damnation, but precedency also; and yet how many of that rank do we read of to be awakened and converted by these rousing Sermons? some few there were indeed that the disease might appear not incurable; but very few, that we may tremble the more of falling into it, or letting it grow upon us. *Peter* learn'd of his Master how to handle the Hypocrite, who having to do with one far gone in this disease, *Simon Magus*, *Acts 8. 21.* he steeps his words as it were in vinegar and gall. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*: there he lays the weight of his charge, that he carry'd a hypocritical heart in his bosome, which was a thousand times worse than his *Simoniacal* fact, (though that foul enough;) it was not barely that fact, but proceeding from a heart in wardly rotten and false (which God gave *Peter* an extraordinary spirit to discern) that prov'd him to be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; only in this better than the damned Souls in Hell, they were in the fire; he in the bond of iniquity (like a fagot bound up) fit for it, but not cast in: they past hope, and he so much left as might amount to a *perhaps if the thought of his heart might*

be forgiven; to give but one instance more, and that is of a whole Church, hypocritical *Laodiceans*, the Spirit of God takes her up more sharply than all the rest, which though he charged with some particular miscarriages, yet finds something among them he owns and commends: But in her, because she was conceited already, (as this leaven of hypocrisy naturally puffs up) he mentions nothing that was good in her, lest it should feed that humour that did so abound already; and take away the smartness of the reproof which was the only probable means left of recovering her. All that inclines to sleep is deadly to a *Lethargick*; and all that is soothing and cockering, dangerous to Hypocrites. Some say the surest way to cure a Lethargy, is to turn it into a Fever: to be sure, the safest way to deal with the Hypocrite, is to bring them from their false peace, to a deep sense of their true misery. Let this then be thy first work; aggravate thy Sin, and put thy soul into mourning for it: when a person who was by the *Priest* (who was to judge in case of leprosie) pronounced unclean; the Leper thus convicted, *was to rend his cloaths, go bare-headed, and to put a covering upon his upper lip*, (all ceremonies used by mourners) and to cry *unclean, unclean*, *Levit. 13. 45.* Thus do thou as a true mourner, sit down and lament this plague of thy heart; cry out bitterly, *unclean, unclean I am*, *Ezek. 15. 17.* not fit, by reason of thy hypocritical heart, to come near God or his Saints, but to be like the Leper, separate from both; if thou hast such a loathsome disease reigning on thee, as did pollute the very seat thou sit on, bed thou liest on, and drop such filthiness on every thing thou comest near, (even into the meat thou eatest, and cup thou drinkest from) that should make all abandon thy nasty company, how great would thy sorrow be, as thou didst sit desolate, and musing alone of thy doleful condition? Such a state thy hypocrisy puts thee into; a plague it is, more offensive to God than such a disease could make thee to men; it runs like a filthy sore through all the duties, and goodly coverings that you can put over it; and defiles them and thee so, that God will take an offering out of the Devils hand, as soon as out of thine, while thou continuest an Hypocrite; and did the Saints of God (with whom thou hast, may be, so much credit, as to be admitted to joyn with them at present) know thee, they would make as much haste from thee, as from him on whom they should see the plague-tokens; but should not thy disease be known till thou art dead, and so thou keep thy reputation with them, yea, possibly by them be thought, when thou diest, a Saint; will this give thee any content in hell, that they are speaking well of thee on earth? *O poor Aristotle* (said one) *thou art praised where thou art not, and burnt where thou art!* he meant it was poor comfort to that great Heathen Philosopher, to be admired by men of learning, that have kept up his fame from generation to generation, if he all the while be miserable in the other World: So here, *O poor Hypocrite*, that art rank'd among Saints on earth, but punish'd among Devils in hell.

Secondly,

Secondly, When thy heart is deeply affected with the sin and misery of thy hypocritical heart, thou must be convinced of thy insufficiency to make a cure of thy self. Hypocrisie is like a *fistula* sore, it may seem a little matter by the small orifice it hath; but it is therefore one of the hardest among wounds to be cured, because it is so hard to find the bottom of it. O take heed thy heart doth not put a cheat upon thy self. It will be very forward to promise it will lie no more, be false and hypocritical no more; but take counsel of a wise man, who bids thee not rely on what it saith, *He is a fool that trusts his own heart*, Prov. 28. 2. O how many die, because loth to be at pains and cost to go to a skilful Physician at first? take heed of self-resolutions, and self-reformations; sin is like the *Kings-evil*, God, not our selves, can cure it. He that will be tinkering with his own heart, and not seek out to Heaven for help, will in the end where he mends one hole, make two worse; where he reforms one Sin, he'll fall into the hands of many more dangerous.

Thirdly, Betake thy self to Christ as thy Physician, on whose skill and faithfulness thou wilt rely entirely for cure. *Si pereundum, inter peristis*, if thou perish, resolve to perish at his door. But for thy comfort know, never any that he undertook, miscarried under his hand, nor ever refused him to undertake the cure of any that came to him on such an errand. He blamed those Hypocrites, *Joh. 9. 40, 43.* because they were ready to throw away their lives, by trusting an *Empirick*, who should come in his own name without any approbation or authority from God for the work, but *would not come to him that they might have life*, though he came in his Fathers Name, and had his full and licence to practise his skill on poor Souls for their recovery. And he that blamed those for not coming, will not, cannot be angry with thee who comest. It is his calling, and men do not use to thrust customers out, but invite them into their shops. When Christ was on earth, he gave this reason, why he conversed so much with *Publicans* and sinners, and so little among the *Pharisees*, because there was more work for him, *Math. 9. 11, 12.* Men set up where they think trade will be quickest. Christ came to be a *Physician* to sick Souls; *Pharisees* were so well in their own conceit, that Christ saw he should have little to do among them, and so he apply'd himself to those who were more sensible of their sickness. If thou poor Soul, beest but come to thy self so far, as to groan under thy cursed Hypocrisie, and directest these thy groans in a prayer to Heaven for Christ's help, thou shalt have thy Physician soon with thee, never fear it. He hath not since he ascended, laid down his calling, but still follows his practice as close as ever; we find him sending his advice from Heaven in that excellent receipt, *Rev. 3. to Laodicea*, what she should do for her recovery out of this very disease of Hypocrisie. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tryed in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, &c.* As if he had said, *Laodicea*, thou tradeest in false ware, de-

ceiving thy self and others with appearances for realities, counterfeit graces for true; thy Gold is dross, thy Garments rotten rags, which do not hide, but discover thy shame; come to me and thou shalt have that which is for thy turn; and better cheap also; for though here is mention of buying, no more is meant than to come with a buyers spirit, valuing Christ and his grace so high, that if they were to be bought, though with all the money in thy purse, yea, blood in thy veins, thou would'st have them, and not go home, and say thou wert hardly used. 'Tis the thirsty Soul that shall be satisfied, only look thy thirst be right and deep.

First, Right; a heart-thirst, and not simply a conscience-thirst. 'Tis a very different heat that causeth the one and the other. Hell-fire may enflame the Conscience, so as to make the guilty sinner thirst for Christ's blood to quench the torment which the wrath of God hath kindled in his bosome. But 'tis Heaven-fire, and only that which begets a kindly heat in the heart, that breaks out in longings of soul for Christ and his Spirit with sweet cooling dews of grace to slack and extinguish the fire of lust and sin.

Again, Look it be Deep. Physicians tell us of a thirst which comes from the dryness of the throat, and not any great inward heat of the stomach; and this thirst may be quenched with a gargle in the mouth, which is spit out again, and goes not down. And truly there is something like this in many that sit under the preaching of the Gospel. Some light touches are now and then found upon the spirits of men and women, occasioned by some sparks that fall on their affections in hearing the Word, whereby they on a sudden express some desires after Christ and his grace, that you would think they would in all haste for Heaven; but being mighty flashes, and weak velleities (rather than strong volitions, and deep desires,) their heat is soon over, and thirst quenched with a little present sweetness they taste while they are hearing a Sermon of Christ (which they spit out again as soon as they are gone home almost) as well as may be, though they never enjoy more of him. Labour therefore for such a deep sense of thy own wretchedness by reason of thy hypocrisie, and of Christ's excellency by reason of that fulness of grace in him, which makes him able to cure thee of thy distemper; that as a man thoroughly a-thirst, can be content with nothing but drink, and not a little of that neither, but a full satisfying draught whatever it costs him: So thou mayest not be brib'd with any thing besides Christ and his sanctifying grace, nor with gifts, profession or pardon of self, (if it could be severed from grace) no not with a little sparkling of grace, but long for whole floods, wherewith thou mayest be fully purg'd and freed of thy cursed lust which now so sadly oppresseth thee. This frame of spirit would put thee under the promise (Heavens security) that thou shalt not lose thy longing; if thou should'st ask Silver and Gold, and seek any worldly enjoyment at this rate, thou might'st spend thy breath and pains in vain; God might let thee roar (like *Dives* in Hell) in the midst of those flames which

which thy covetous lust had kindled, without affording a drop of that (to cool thy tongue) which thou so violently pantest after. But if Christ and his grace be the things thou would'st have, yea,

must have, truly then thou shalt have them; *Matthew 5. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

CHAP. XIV.

An Exhortation to those who upon tryal are found to be true in heart, or sincere, to wear this Belt close girt to them in the daily exercise of it; with Directions for that purpose.

I Come to the second sort, such (I mean) whose Consciences upon diligent enquiry, give a fair testimony for their sincerity, that their hearts are true and upright. That which I have by way of counsel to leave with them, is to gird this belt which they have about them, close in the exercise and daily practice of it. Gird this belt, I say, close to thee; that is, be very careful to walk in the daily practice and exercise of thy uprightness. Think every morning thou art not drest till this girdle put on. The Proverb is true here, *ungirt, unblest*; thou art no company for God that day, in which thou art insincere. If *Abraham* will walk with God, he must be upright; and canst thou live a day without his company? *Rachel* paid dear for her Mandrakes, to part with her Husband for them; a worse bargain that *Soul* makes, that to purchase some worldly advantage, pawns its sincerity; which gone, God is sure to follow after. And as thou canst not walk with God, so not expect any blessing from God; The Promises, like a box of precious Oyntment, are kept to be broke over the head of the upright, *Mic. 2. 7. Do not my Words do good to him that walketh uprightly?* And sure it is ill walking in that way, where there is found no word from God to bid us good speed; Some are so superstitious, that if a Hare crosseth them, they will turn back, and go no further that day. But a bold man is he, that dares go on when the Word of God lies cross his way. Where the Word doth not bless, it curseth; where it promiseth not, it threatens; A Soul in its uprightness, approving its self to God, is safe, (like a Traveller going about his lawful business betwixt Sun and Sun) if any harm or loss comes to such a Soul, God will bear him out; the promise is on his side, by pleading it, he may recover his loss at Gods hands, who stands bound to keep him harmless. See to this purpose, *Pf. 84. 11.* But they are Directions, not Motives, I am in this place to give.

SECT. I.

First, Therefore if thou would'st walk in the exercise of thy sincerity, *Walk in the view of God.* That of *Luther* is most true, *Omnia precepta sunt in primo tanquam capite*; All the commands are wrap'd up in the first; for (saith he) all sin is a contempt of God; and so we cannot break any other commands, but we break the first. *We think amiss of God, before we do amiss against God*; This God commended to *Abraham*, *Insuper omnium*, of Sovereign use to preserve his sincerity; *Walk before me, and be thou*

upright, *Gen. 17. 1.* This kept *Moses* his girdle straight, and close to his loyns, that he was neither bribed with the treasures of *Egypt*, nor brow-beaten out of his sincerity, with the anger of so great a King, *Heb. 11. 27. For he endured, as seeing him who was invisible.* He had a greater than *Pharaoh* in his eye, and this kept him right.

First, Walk (Christian) in the view of Gods Omniscience, this is a girding consideration; say to thy Soul, *Cave, videt Deus*, take heed, God seeth; It is under the Rose (as the common phrase is) that treason is spoken, when Subjects think they are far enough from their Kings hearing; but did such know the Prince to be under the window, or behind the hangings, their discourse would be more loyal. This made *David* so upright in his walking, *Psaln 119. 168. I have kept thy precepts, for all my ways are before thee.* If *Alexander's* empty Chair (which his Captains, when they met in counsel, sate before them) did awe them so, as to keep them in good order; what would it, for to set God looking on us in our eye? The Jews covered Christs face, and then buffeted him, *Mark 14. 65.* So does the Hypocrite; he first faith in his heart, God sees not, or at least he forgets that he sees, and then makes bold to sin against him; like that foolish Bird, which runs her head among the reeds, and thinks her self safe from the Fowler, as if because she did not see him, therefore he could not see her. *Te mihi abscondam, non me tibi.* Aug. *I may hide thee from my eye, but not my self from thine.* Thou mayest (poor creature) hide God by thy ignorance and atheism, so that thou shalt not see him, but thou canst not so as he shall not see thee. *All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* O remember thou hast to do with God in all thou dost, whether thou beest in Shop or Closet, Church or Market; and he will have to do with thee, for he sees thee round, and can tell from whence thou comest, when (like *Gehazi* before his Master) thou enterest into his presence, and standest demurely before him in his worship, as if thou hadst been no where; then he can tell thee thy thoughts, and without any labour of pumping them out by thy confession, set them in order before thee; yea, thy thoughts that are gone from thee (like *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream from him) and thou hast forgot what they were at such a time, and in such a place, forty, fifty years ago, God hath them all in the light of his countenance, as Atomes are in the beams of the Sun; and he can, yea, will give thee a sight of them;

them, that they shall walk in thy conscience to thy horror, as *John Baptist's Ghost* did in *Herod's*.

Secondly, Walk in the view of his Providence, and care over thee; when God bids *Abraham* be upright, he strengthens his faith on him; *I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be perfect*, as if he had said, act thou for me, and I will take care for thee: when once we begin to call his care in question towards us, then will our Sincerity falter in our walking before him; Hypocritie lyes hid in distrust and jealousy as in its cause; if the Soul dare not rely on God, it cannot be long true to God.

Abraham was jealous of *Abimelech*, therefore he dissembled with him; thus do we with God; we doubt Gods care, and then live by our wit, and carve for our selves; Up, make us gods (say they) we know not what is become of *Moses*. The unbelieving *Jews*, flat against the command of God, keep *Manna* while the morrow, *Exod.* 16. 19. and why? but because they had not faith to trust him for another meal: This is the old weapon the Devil hath ever used to beat the Christian out of his Sincerity with, *Curse God, and dye*, said he to *Job* by his Wife, *Job* 2. 9. As if she had said, What? Wilt yet hold the Castle of thy Sincerity for God? Cap- tains think they may yield, when no relief comes to them; and Subjects make account, if the Prince protect not them, they are not bound to serve him.

Thou hast lain thus long in an afflicted state, be- sieged close with sorrows on every hand, and no news to this day come from heaven of any care that God takes for thee; therefore curse God, and dye, yea, Christ had him using the same engine to draw him off from his faithfulness to his Father, when he bad him turn stones into bread. We see therefore of what importance it is to strengthen our faith on the care, and providence of God for our provision and protection; which is the cause why God hath made such abundant provision to shut all doubting, and fear of this out of the hearts of his people. The promises are so fitly placed, that as safe harbours, upon what coast soever we be sail- ing, (condition we are in) if any storm arise at Sea, or enemy chase us, we may put into some one or other of them, and be safe, though this one were enough, could we find no more to serve our turn, *1 Chron.* 16. 9. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in behalf of them (or strongly to hold with them) whose heart is perfect towards him: God doth not set others to watch, but his own eyes keep Centinel; now to watch with the child, like the own mother, there is the immediacy of his providence; we may say of sincere Souls, what is said of *Canaan*, *Deut.* 11. 9, 10. It is a land (so they are a people) the Lord himself careth for, his eyes are alwayes on them. Again, his eyes run to and fro, there is the vigilancy of his providence; no danger, no temptation finds him napping, but as a faithful watch-man is ever walking up and down; so the eyes of God run to and fro: He that keepeth *Israel* (the sincere Soul which is the *Israelite* indeed) shall neither slumber nor sleep, *Psal.* 121. 4. that is, not little nor much;

nor slumber by day, nor sleep by night; two words are there used, one that signifies the short sleep used in the heat of day, the other for the more sound sleep of the night.

Thirdly, Throughout the whole earth, there is the universality, and extent of Gods care; 'tis an encom- passing providence, it walks the rounds, not any one sincere Soul left out of the line of his care. He has the number of them to a man, and all are alike cared for. We disfigure the beautiful face of Gods providence, when we fancy him to have a cast off his eye, and care to one more than another.

Fourthly, To shew himself strong in the behalf of them; there is the efficacy of his care and providence, his eyes do not run to and fro to espy dangers, and only tell us what they are: As the Centinel wakes the City when any enemy comes, but cannot defend them from their fury. A child may do this, yea, the *Geese* did this for *Romes* Capitol. But God watcheth not to tell us our dangers, but to save us from them; the Saints must needs be a happy people, because a people saved by the Lord, *Deut.* 33. 29. God doth not only see with his eyes, but also fights with his eyes. He gave such a look to the *Egyptians*, as turn'd the Sea on them to their destruction.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Labour to act from love, and not fear. Slavish fear, and sincerity cannot agree; if one be in the increase, the other is in the wain alwayes. See them opposed, *2 Tim.* 1. 7. God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind, that is, sincere; where he implies that fear is weak and impotent, easily scared from God, his truth and service; and not so only, but unsound also; not trusting such a one with any great matter. The slave, though he works hard, (because indeed he dares no other) yet is soon drawn into a conspi- racy against his Master, because he hates him while he fears him; we see this only among the *Turks*, (against whom those Christians used as absolute Slaves by them in their Gallies, do, when they have advantage in fight, often purchase their own liberty, by cutting the throats of their tyrant-Masters;) but also in Kingdoms, where Subjects rather fear than love their Princes, how ready they are to invite another into the Throne, or welcome any that should court them: Thus fast and loose will he be with God, that is prickt on with the Swords point of his wrath, and not drawn with the cords of his love. *Israel* is an example beyond parallel for this; When God slew them, they sought after him, never- theless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongue; for their heart was not right with him, *Psal.* 78. 34, 35. they feared God, and loved their lusts, and therefore they betray'd his glory at every turn, into their hands; as *Herod* did *John's* head, whom he fear'd, into her hands whom he loved. And truly there is too much of this slavish fear to be found in the Saints bosomes, or else the whip should not be so often in Gods hand. We find God checking his people for this, and make their servile spirit the reason of his severity towards

towards them. *Is Israel a servant, a home-born slave? Why is he spoiled?* Jer. 2. 14. As if God had said, What is the reason that I must use thee, who art my dear Child, as courteously as if thou wert a servant, a slave, laying on blow after blow upon thy back with such heavy judgements? Wouldst thou know? read V. 7. *Hast thou not procured this to thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?* Thou maist thank thy self for this my unusual dealing with thee. If the Child will forget his own ingenuity, and nothing but blows will work with him, then the Father must deal with his Child according to his servile spirit. When God led *Israel* by the way, as a Father his Child lovingly, he flung from him; and if they would not lead by love, then no wonder he makes them drive by fear. O Christian, act more by love, and thou wilt save Gods putting thee into fear with his whip; Love will keep thee close and true to him. The very Character of Love is, *It seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. And what is it to be sincere, but when the Christian seeks Christs interest, and not his own? *Jonathan* loved *David* dearly, this made him incur his Fathers wrath, trample on the hopes of a Kingdom which he had for him and his posterity, rather than be false to his friend. *Lot* delivers up his Daughters to the lust of the *Sodomites*, rather than his guests. *Sampson* could not conceal that great secret from *Dalilah* whom he loved, wherein his strength lay, though it was as much as his life was worth to plab it to her. Love is the great Conqueror of the World. Thus will thy soul being enflamed with love to Christ, set all the worldly interest adrift, rather than put his honour to the least hazard. *Abraham* did not more willingly put his sacrificing knife to the Rams throat to save his dear *Isaac's* life, than thou wilt be to sacrifice thy life to keep thy sincerity alive. Love is compared to fire, the nature of which is, to assimilate to it self all that comes near it, or to consume them: It turns all into fire or ashes; nothing that is Heterogeneous can long dwell with its own simple pure nature. Thus love to Christ will not suffer the near Neighbourhood of any thing in its bosom, that is derogatory to Christ, either it will reduce or abandon it, be it pleasure, profit, or whatever else; *Abraham* who loved *Hagar* and *Ishmael* in their due place, when the one began to juggle with her Mistress, and the other jeer and mock at *Isaac*, he packs them both out of doors; Love to Christ will not suffer thee to side with any thing against Christ, but take his part with him against any that oppose him, and so long thy sincerity is out of danger.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Meditate often on the simplicity and sincerity of Gods heart to his Saints? What more powerful consideration can be thought on to make us true to God, than the faithfulness and truth of God to us? *Asalom*, though as vile a Dissembler as liv'd, yet when *Hushai* came out to him, he suspected him, 2 Sam. 16. 17. And *Abfalom* said to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not out to thy friend?* His own Consci-

ence told him, it was horrible baseness for him that had found *David* such a true friend, now to join in rebellious Arms against him; and though *Abfalom* that said this, did offer greater violence to this Law of Love, yet he question'd it seems, whether any durst be so wicked besides himself? When therefore (Christian) thou findest thy heart warping into any insincere practice, lay it under this consideration; and if any thing of God and his grace be in thee, it will unbend thee, and bring thee to rights again. Ask thy Soul, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* Such a friend as God hath been, is, and surely will be to thee for ever? God, when his people sin, to put them to the blush, asks them, Whether he gives them any cause for their unkind and undutiful carriage to him? Thus saith the Lord, *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* Jer. 2. 5. So *Moses* intending to pay *Israel* home (before he goes up and dyes on *Nebo*) for all their Hypocrisie, Murmuring, and horrible Rebellions against God, all along from first setting out of *Egypt* to that day, he brings in their Charge, and draws out the several Indictments, that they were guilty of. Now to add the greater weight to every one, he in the fore-front of all his speech, shews what a God he is, that they have done all this against.

He makes way to the declaiming against their sins, by the proclaiming the glory of God against whom they were committed, Deut. 32. 3. *I will publish the Name of God, ascribe ye greatness to our God:* And very observable it is, what of Gods Name he publisheth, the more to aggravate their sins, and help them to conceive of their hainous nature, Verse 4. *He is thy rock, his work is perfect; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.* He chooseth to instance in the truth and sincerity of Gods heart to them in all his dispensations, as that which might make them most ashamed of their doings. Now because this one consideration may be of such use to hedge in the heart, and keep it close to God in sincerity, I shall shew, wherein the truth and sincerity of Gods love appears to his Saints, every one of which will furnish us with a strong argument to be sincere and upright with God.

First, The Sincerity of Gods heart appears in the principle he acts from, and ends he aims at in all his dispensations. Love is the principle he constantly acts from, and their good the end he propounds; from these he never swerves: The fire of love never goes out of his heart, nor their good out of his eye: When he frowns with his brow, chides with his lip, and strikes with his hand, even then his heart burns with love, and his thoughts meditate peace to them. Famous is that place for this purpose, Jer. 24. 5. *I will acknowledge them that are carried away captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good, I will set mine eyes on them for good.* And this was one of the sharpest judgements God ever brought upon his people, and yet in this he is designing mercy, and projecting how to do them good: So in the Wilderness, when they cryed out upon *Moses* for bringing them thither to kill them, they were more afraid than hurt; God wish'd them better than they dreamed of; his intent

intent was to humble them, that he might do them good in the latter end: So sincere is God to his people, that he gives his own glory in Hoſtage to them for their ſecurity; his own Robes of glory are lock'd up in their proſperity and ſalvation; he will not, indeed he cannot, preſent himſelf in all his magnificence and royalty, till he hath made up his intended thoughts of mercy to his people; he is pleaſed to prorogue the time of his appearing in all his glory to the World, till he hath actually accompliſh'd their deliverance, that he and they may come forth together in their glory, on the ſame day, *Pſal. 102. 16. When the Lord ſhall build up Zion, he ſhall appear in his glory.* The Sun is ever glorious in the moſt cloudy day, but appears not ſo till it hath ſcattered the clouds that muſt it up from the light of the lower World; God is glorious when the World ſees him not; but his declarative glory then appears, when the glory of his mercy, truth and faithfulneſs break forth in his peoples ſalvation. Now what ſhame muſt this cover thy face with (O Chriſtian) if thou ſhoul'd'ſt not ſincerely aim at thy Gods glory, who loves thee; yea, all his Children ſo dearly, as to ſhip his own glory and your happineſs in one bottom, that he cannot now loſe the one, and ſave the other?

Secondly, The truth and ſincerity of God to his people; appears in the openneſs and plainneſs of his heart to them. A friend that is cloſe and reſerv'd, deſerv'dly comes under a cloud in the thoughts of his friend; but he who carries, as it were, a window of Cryſtal in his breaſt, through which his friend may read what thoughts are writ in his very heart, delivers himſelf from the leaſt ſuſpicion of unfaithfulneſs. Truly thus open-hearted is God to his Saints. *The ſecret of the Lord is upon them that fear him.* He gives us in his Key, that will let us into his very heart, and acquaint us what his thoughts are; yea, were towards us, before a ſtone was laid in the Worlds foundation, and this is no other than his Spirit, *1 Cor. 3. one who knows the deep things of God;* for he was at the Council-table in Heaven, where all was tranſacted; this his Spirit he employed to put forth and publiſh in the Scripture (indicted by him) the ſubſtance of thoſe counſels of love, which had paſt between the Trinity of perſons for our Salvation; and that nothing may be wanting for our ſatisfaction, he hath appointed the ſame holy Spirit to abide in his Saints, that as Chriſt in Heaven preſents our deſires to him, ſo he may interpret his mind out of his Word to us; which Word answers the heart of God, as face answers face in the Glaſs. There is nothing deſirable in a true friend, as to this openneſs of heart, but God performs in a tranſcendent manner to his people; if any danger hangs over their Heads, he cannot conceal it; *By them (ſaith David) is thy ſervant warned,* ſpeaking of the Word of God; one Meſſenger or other God will ſend to give his Saints the Alarm, whether their danger be from Sin within, or Enemies without; *H Ezekiah* was in danger of inward pride, God ſends a temptation to let him know what was in his heart, that he might by falling once, be kept from

falling again. Satan had a project againſt Peter's Chriſt gives him notice of it, *Luke 22.* If any of his Children by ſin diſ-ſeſe him, he doth not (as falſe friends uſe) diſſemble the diſpleaſure he conceives, and carry it fair outwardly with them, while he keeps a ſecret grudge againſt them inwardly; no, he tells them roundly of it, and corrects them ſoundly for it; but entertains no ill-will againſt them; and when he leads his people into an afflicted ſtate, he loves them ſo, that he cannot leave them altogether in the dark, concerning the thoughts of love he hath to them in delivering them; but to comfort them in the Priſon, doth open his heart before-hand to them, as we ſee in the greateſt calamities that have befallen the *Jewiſh Church in Egypt and Babylon*, as alſo the *Gospel-Church under Antichriſt.* The promiſes for the deliverance out of all theſe, were expreſt before the ſufferings came: when Chriſt was on Earth, how free and open was he to his Diſciples, both in telling them what calamities ſhould betide them, and the bleſſed iſſue of them all, when he ſhould come again to them? and why? but to confirm them in the perſwaſion of the ſincerity of his heart towards them, as thoſe words import, *Joh. 14. If it were not ſo, I would have told you:* As if he had ſaid, it would not have conſiſted with the ſincere love I bear to you, to hide any thing that is fit for you to know, from you, or make them otherwiſe than they are: And when he doth conceal any truths from them for the preſent, ſee his candor and ſincerity, opening the reaſon of his veiling them, to be not that he grutcht them the communication of them, but becauſe they could not at preſent bear them. Now (Chriſtian) improve all this to make thee more plain-hearted with God. Is he ſo free and open to thee, and wilt thou be reſerv'd to him? Doth thy God unboſome his mind to thee, and wilt not thou pour out all thy Soul to him? Dareſt thou not truſt him with thy ſecrets, that makes thee privy to his counſels of love and mercy? In a word, dareſt thou for ſhame go about to harbour and hide from him any traitorous luſt in thy Soul, whoſe love will not ſuffer him to conceal any danger from thee? God, who is ſo exact and true to the Law of friendſhip with his people, expects the like ingenuity from them.

Thirdly, The ſincerity of Gods heart and affection to his people, appears in the unmoveableneſs of his love. As there is no ſhadow of turning in the being of God, ſo not in the love of God to his people; there is no vertical point; his love ſtands ſtill like the Sun in *Gibeah*, it goes not down, or declines, but continues in its full ſtrength, *Eſay 54. 7. With everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer.* Sorry man repents of his love, the hotteſt affection cools in his boſome; love in the Creature is like fire on the Hearth, now blazing, anon blinking, and going out; but in God, like fire in the Element, that never fails. In the Creature, 'tis like water in a River, that falls and riſeth; but in God, like water in the Sea, that is always full, and knows no ebbing or flowing. Nothing can take off his love where he

hath placed it; it can neither be corrupted nor conquered; attempts are made both ways, but in vain.

First, His Love cannot be corrupted. There have been such, that have dared to tempt God, and court, yea, bribe the Holy One of Israel, to desert and come off from his people. Thus Balaam went to win God over to Balak's side against Israel; which to obtain, he spared no cost, but built Altar after Altar, and heaped Sacrifice upon Sacrifice; yea, what would they not have done to have gain'd but a word or two out of Gods mouth against his people? But he kept true to them; yea, left a brand of his displeasure upon that Nation for hiring Balaam, and sending him on such an errand to God, *Deut. 33. 4.* This passage we find of God minding his people, to continue in them a perswasion of his sincere stedfast love to them. *Micah 6. 5.* O my people remember what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the Son of Beor answered him, from Shittim unto Gilgal: And why should they remember this? That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; that is, that you may know how true and faithful a God I have been to you: Sometimes he makes use of it to provoke them to be sincere to him, as he in that prov'd himself to them, *Josh. 24. 9.* He tells them how Balak sent Balaam to set God a cursing them; But, saith the Lord, I would not hearken to him, but made him that came to curse you, with his own lips entail a blessing on you and yours; And why is this story mention'd? see *ver. 14.* Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth. A most natural and reasonable inference from the premises of Gods truth and faithfulness. O Christian, wouldst thou have thy love to God made incorruptible? Embalm it often in thy thoughts with the sweet spices of Gods sincere love to thee, which is immortal, and cannot see corruption. Believe Gods true to thee, and be false to him if thou darest. It is a solecism and barbarism in love, to return falseness for faithfulness.

Secondly, The Love of God to his Saints cannot be conquer'd. That which puts it hardest to it, is not the power of his peoples enemies, (whether Men or Devils) but his peoples sins. God makes nothing of their whole power and wrath, when combined together; but truly the sins of his people, these put Omnipotency it self to the tryal. We never hear God groaning under, or complaining of the power of his enemies, but often sadly of his peoples sins and unkindnesses; these load him, these break his heart, and make him cry out, as if he were at a stand in his thoughts, (to use a humane expression) and found it not easie what to do, whether love them, or leave them; vote for their life or death; Well, whatever expressions God useth, to make his people more deeply repent their unkindnesses shewn to him, yet God is not at a loss what to do in this case; his love determines his thoughts in favour of his Covenant-people, when their carriage least deserves it, *Hos. 11. 9.* The Devil thought he had enough against *Josuah*, when he could find some filth on his garment, to carry this in a tale, and tell God what a dirty case his Child was in; he made just account

to have set God against him, but he was mistaken; for instead of provoking him to wrath, it mov'd him to pity; instead of falling out with him, he finish Christ praying for him, *Zech. 3.* Now improve this in a meditation, Christian. Is the Love of God so unconquerable, that thy very sins cannot break, or cut the knot of that Covenant which ties thee to him? And does it not shame thee, that thou shouldst be so fast and loose with him? Thou shouldst labour to have the very Image of thy heavenly Fathers love more clearly stamp'd on the face of thy love to him. As nothing can conquer his love to thee, so neither let any thing prejudice thy love to him; Say to thy Soul, Shall not I cleave close to God, when he hides his face from me, who hath not cast me off, when I have sinfully turn'd my back on him? Shall not I give testimony to his Truth and Name, (though others desert the one, and reproach the other) who hath kept love burning in his heart to me, when I have been dishonouring him? What, God yet on my side, and gracious to me, (after such backslidings as these) and shall I again grieve his Spirit, and put his love to shame with more undutifulness? God forbid, this were to do my utmost to make God accessary to my sin, by making his love fuel for it.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Beware of presumptuous sins, these give the deepest wound to uprightness, yea, are inconsistent with it, *Psal. 19. 13.* Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright. One single act of presumption, is inconsistent with the actual exercise of uprightness; as we see in David, who by that one foul sin of Murther, lost the present use of uprightness, and was in that particular too like one of the fools in Israel, and therefore stands as the only exception to the general testimony which God gave unto his uprightness, *1 Kings 15. 5.* David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turn'd aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. That is, there was no such presumption as any other sin committed by him, and therefore they are here discounted (as to this) that they did not make such a breach on his uprightness, as this one did. And as one act of a sin, presumptuous, is inconsistent with actual uprightness; so habitual uprightness is very hardly consistent with habitual presumption; if one act of a presumptuous sin, and as I may so say, one sip of this poisonous cup, doth so sadly infect the spirit of a gracious person, and change his complexion, that he is not like himself; how deadly must it needs be to all uprightness, to drink from day to day in it? And therefore as Daniel purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings meat, *Dan. 18.* So do thou daily put thy self under some such holy Bond, that thou wilt not defile thy self with any presumptuous sin; for indeed this is properly the Kings meat, I mean the Devils (that Prince of darkness) who can himself commit none but presumptuous sins, and

note

churly

chiefly labours to defile Souls by eating of this his Dish; say as *Austin* in another case, *Errare possum, Hæreticus esse nolo*, I may err, but I am resolv'd not to be an Heretick. I may have many failings, but by the grace of God, I'll labour that I be not a presumptuous sinner; and if thou would'st not be in a presumptuous sin, take heed thou makest not light of less infirmities; when *David's* heart smote him for rending the skirt of *Saul*, he stopt, and made a happy retreat, his tender Conscience giving him a privy check for rending his skirt, would not suffer him to cut his throat, and take away his life, which was better than rayment. But at another time, when his Conscience was more heavy eyed, and did not do this friendly office to him, but let him shoot his amorous glances after *Barsheba*, without giving him any Alarm of his danger; the good man (like one whose senses are gone, and head dizzy at the first trip upon a steep Hill) could not recover himself, but tumbled from one sin to another, till at last he fell into the deep pit of murder. When the River is frozen, a man will venture to walk, and run where he durst not set his foot, if the Ice were but melted or broke. O when the heart of a godly man himself is so hardened that he can stand on an infirmity though never so little, and his Conscience not crack under him, how far may he go? I tremble to think what sin he may fall into.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Get above the love and fear of the World. The Christians sincerity is not eclips'd without the interposition of the Earth betwixt God and his Soul.

First, The love of the World, this is a fit Root for Hypocrisie to grow upon; if the heart be violently set on any thing the World hath, and it comes to vote peremptorily for having it, I must be worth so much a year, have such Honour; and the Creature begins with *Ahab*, to be sick with longing after them; then the man is in great danger to take the first ill counsel that Satan or the flesh gives him for the attaining his ends, though prejudicial to his uprightness. Hunters mind not the way they go in (over hedge and ditch they leap) so they may have the Hare.

It is a wonder, I confels, that any Saint should have so strong a scent after the Creature, that hath the favour of Christ's ointments poured into his bosome. One would think the sweet perfume, which comes so hot from those beds of Spices, the promises, should spoil the Christians hunting-game after the Creature, and one scent should hinder the taking in the other; The purer sweetneses that breathe from Christ and Heaven in them, should so fill the Christian's senses, that the other enjoyments (being of a more gross and earthy favour) should find no pleasing relishment in his nostrils; which indeed is most true and certain so long as the Christian hath his spiritual senses open, and in exercise. But alas, as upon some cold in the Body, the Head is stopt, and the senses bound up from

doing their office; so through the Christians negligence, a spiritual distemper is easily got, whereby those senses (graces I mean) which should judge of things, are sadly obstructed; and now when the Christian is not in temper for enjoying these purer sweetneses, the Devil hath a fair advantage of starting some creature-enjoyment, and presenting it before the Christian, which the flesh soon scents and carries the poor Christian after it, till grace comes a little to its temper; and then he gives over the Chase with shame and sorrow.

Secondly, Get above the fear of the World. The fear of man brings a snare. A Coward will run into any hole (though never so dishonourable) so he may save himself from what he fears; and when the holiest are under the power of this temptation, they are too like other men; *Abraham* in a pang of fear dissembles with *Abimelech*; yea, *Peter*, when not his life, but his reputation seem'd to be in little danger, did not *deponed*, walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, he did not foot it right, as became so holy a man to do, but took one step forward, and another back again; as if he had not liked his way; now he will eat with the *Guriles*, and anon he withdraws; now, what made him dissemble, and his feet thus double in his going? nothing but a qualm of fear that came over his heart, as you may see *Gal. 2. 12.* compared with *vers. 14.* *Fearing them which were of the circumcision*, dissembled, and drew others into a party with him.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, and lastly, Keep a strict eye over thy own heart in thy daily walking; Hypocrisie is a weed with which the best soyl is so tainted, that it needs daily care and dressing to keep it under. He that rides on a stumbler, had need have his eye on his way, and hand on his Bridle; such is thy heart Christian, yea, it oft stumbles in the fairest way, when thou least fearest it; look to it therefore, and keep a strict rein over it, *above all keeping, keep thy heart*, *Prov. 4. 23.* The servant keeps his way when he travels in his Master's company, but when sent of an errand alone, then he hath his vagaries; many a wry step may be prevented, and extravagancy in thy daily walking; did'st thou walk in company with thy self, (I mean, observe thy self and way) in this sense, most in the World are besides themselves, strangers to their own walking, as much as to their own faces: every one that lives with them, knows them better than themselves, which is a horrible shame. And let not so vain an opinion find place with thee, that, because sincere, thou need'st not keep so strict an eye over thy heart; as if thy heart which is gracious, could not play false with God and thee too; doth not *Solomon* brand him on the fore-head for a fool, that trusts his own heart? if thou beest, as thou sayest, sincere, I cannot believe self-love should so far prevail with thee; they are the ignorant and profane whose hearts are stark naught, that cry them up for good: But it is one part of

the goodness of a heart made truly good by grace, to see more into, and complain more of its own naughtiness. Bring thy heart therefore often upon the review, and take its accounts solemnly; he takes the way to make his servant a Thief, that doth not ask him now and then what money he hath in his hand. I read indeed of some in good *Yehoiada's* days that were trusted with the money for the repair of the Temple, with whom they did not so much as reckon how they laid it out; *For they dealt faithfully*; 2 Kings 12. 15. but thou hadst not best to do so with thy heart, lest it set thee on

score with God, and thy own Conscience more than thou wilt get wiped out in haste. Many Talents God puts into thy hand, Health, Liberty, Sabbaths, Ordinances, Communion of Saints, and the like, for the repair of thy spiritual Temple; the work of Grace in thee; ask now thy Soul, how every one of these are laid out; may be thou wilt find some of this money spent, and the work never a whit the more forward: It stands thee in hand to look to it, for God will have an account, though thou art so favourable to thy deceitful heart to call for none.

CHAP. XV.

Counsel and Comfort to those who are Sincere, but drooping doubting Souls; who neither are condemned absolutely in their Consciences for Hypocrites, nor fully absolv'd from the suspicion of it in their own thoughts.

WE have done with the second sort of persons; Those, who upon search find their Consciences bearing witness for their uprightness.

Thirdly, There is a third sort remains yet to be spoken to, and they are doubting Souls, who are indeed sincere, but dare not be persuaded to think so well of themselves. They come from the trial which they were desired to put themselves upon, and bring in an *ignoramus*, we know not whether we be sincere or no. Now to these I would give these words of counsel, and the Lord give his blessing with them.

SECT. I.

1. Take heed Satan doth not draw you to conclude you are Hypocrites, because you are without the present evidence of your Sincerity. To say so, were to offend against the generations of Gods dear Children, many of whom must (if this were a true inference from such premises) pass the same sentence upon themselves; for such precious Souls there are, from whose eyes the truth of their grace, and sincerity of their hearts is at this day hid, and yet are not without either. The *Patriarchs* had their money all day bound up in their Sacks as they travelled, though they did not know this, till they came to their *Inns*, and open'd them. Thus there is a treasure of sincerity hid in many a Soul, but the time to open the Sack, and let the Soul know its Riches, is not come. Many are now in Heaven, have shot the Gulf, and are safely landed there, who were sadly tost with fears all along their Voyage about the truth of grace in them; Faith unfeigned puts a Soul into the Ark Christ; but it doth not hinder, but such a one may be Sea-sick in the Ship; 'tis Christs work, not graces, to evidence it self to our eye so demonstratively as to enable us to own it. Besides, an Organ fitly disposed, there is required a light to irradiate the *medium*; so besides truth of grace, it is necessary there be the spirit being another light, for want of which the

Soul is benighted in its thoughts, and must cry for another, and he no other than the holy Spirit to lead him into the light. This is the great Messenger which alone is able to shew a man his uprightness; but as the eye may be a seeing eye in the dark, when it doth not see any thing; so there may be truth of grace, where there is not present sense of that truth; yea, the Creature may be passionately hunting from Ordinance to Ordinance, to get the Sincerity which it already hath; as sometimes we may have seen one seek very earnestly all about his House for his Hat, when at the same time he hath it on his Head; well, lay down this as a real truth in thy Soul; I may be upright, though at present I am not able to see it clearly; This, though it will not bring in a full comfort, yet it may be some support till that come; as a shore to thy wayward House, though it does not mend it, yet it will underprop and keep it standing till the Master-workman comes, the *Holy Spirit*, who with one kind word to thy Soul, is able to set thee right in thy own thoughts, and make thee stand strong on the promise, the only true basis and foundation of all comfort. Be not more cruel to thy Soul (O Christian) than thou wouldst to thy Friend (shall I say) yea, thy Enemies body; shouldst thou didst not much love, lie sick in thy House, yea, so sick, that if you should ask him whether he be alive, he could not tell you, (his senses and strength being both at present gone) would you presently lay him out, and Coffin him up for the Grave, because you cannot have it from his own mouth, that he is alive? Surely not. O how unreasonable and bloody then is Satan, who would presently have thee put thy self into the pit-hole of despair, because thy grace is not so strong as to speak for it self at present.

SECT. II.

2. Let me send thee back upon a *melius inquirendum*; look once again more narrowly, whether Satan,

Satan, that *Job*, hath not the great hand in these questions and scruples started in thy bosome about thy Sincerity, meerly as his last design upon thee, that he may amuse and distract thee with false fears, when thou wilt not be flatter'd with false hopes? The time was, thou wert really worse, and then by his means thou thought'st thy self better than thou wert. And now since thou hast changed thy way, disown'd thy former confidence, been acquainted with Christ, and got some favour of his holy ways in thy spirit, so as to make thee strongly breathe after him, thou art affrighted with many apparitions of fears in thy sad thoughts, if not charging thee for a Hypocrite, yet calling in question the truth of thy heart. 'Tis worth (I say) the enquiring, whether it be not the same hand again, the Devil, though knocking at another door; no Player hath so many several dresses to come in upon the Stage, as the Devil hath forms of temptation, and this a Suit which he very ordinarily hath been known to wear; if it were thy case only, thou might'st have more suspicion, lest these fears should be the just rebukes of thine own heart; but when thou findest many of thy fellow-brethren (whose sincerity thou dar'st not doubt, though thou savest not so much charity for thy self) their complaints to meet with thine, that no Key (though made on purpose) can more fit all the Wards of a Lock, than their condition doth thine; this, I say, may well make thee set about another search to find whether he be not come forth a lying spirit, to abuse the tender spirit with such news, as he knows worse cannot come to thy ears; that thou dost not love Jesus Christ as thou pretendest; and deceivest but thy self to think otherwise: Thus this foul spirit (like a brazen-fac'd Whore that lays her Child at an honest persons door) doth impudently charge away with that which they are little guilty of, knowing that so much will likely stick of his bold accusation, to the poor Christians spirit, as shall keep the door open to let in another temptation which he much desires to convey into his bosome by the favour and under the shadow of this, and it is ordinarily this; to scare the Christian from duty, and knock off the Wheels of his Chariot, which used so often to carry him into the presence of God in his Ordinances, meerly upon a suspicion that he is not sincere in them, and better stay at home without hearing, or joyning with Gods people in any other duty, than go up and shew the naughtiness of thy heart, saith the Devil. Had the Serpent put forth her hand to the forbidden fruit, than he comes with in this temptation, to persuade the poor Christian not to touch, or taste of that fruit which God hath commanded to be eaten; Ordinances I mean to be enjoyed by thee? yet (Christian) thou hast reason (if I mistake not) to bless God, if he suffers thy Enemy so far to open his mind, by which thou mayest have some light to discover the wickedness of his design, in the other temptation questioning thy Sincerity. Dost thou not now perceive, poor Soul, what made the loud cry of thy Hypocrite in thy fears? the Devil did not like

to see thee so busie with Ordinances, nor thy acquaintance to grow so fast with God in them; and he knew no way but this to knock thee off. Bide at his other baits thou would'st not; Sin, though never so well cook'd and garnish'd, is not a dish for thy tooth (he sees) and therefore either he must affright thee from these by troubling thy imagination with fears of thy Hypocrite in them, or else he may throw his Cap at thee, and give thee for one got out of his reach; dost thou think, poor Soul, that if thy heart were so false and hypocritical in thy duties, that he would make all this busie about them? He doth not use to misplace his batteries thus, to mount them, where there is no Enemy to offend him; thy hypocritical prayers and hearing would hurt him no more, than if none at all. Neither doth he use to be so kind, as to tell Hypocrites of the falseness of their hearts, this is the Chain with which he hath them by the foot, and 'tis his great care to hide it from them, lest the rattling of it in their Conscience, awaken them to some endeavour to knock it off, and so they make an escape out of his prison. Be therefore of good comfort (poor Soul) if thy Conscience brings not Scripture-proof to condemn thee for an Hypocrite, fear not the Devils charge; he shall not be on the Bench when thou comest to be tryed for thy life; nor his testimony of any value at that day; why then should his tongue be any slander to thee now?

. S E C T. III.

3. Neglect no means for the getting thy truth of heart and sincerity evidenced to thee; it is to be had. This is the *white stone with the new name in it, which no man knoweth but he that receives it*, promised, *Rev. 2. 17.* And I hope thou dost not think this to be such an *ens rationis*, an imaginary thing, as the *Philosophers Stone* is, which none could ever say to this day, that he had it in his hand. Holy Paul he had this *white stone* sparkling in his Conscience more glorious than all the precious stones in *Aaron's Breast-plate*. *2 Cor. 1. 12.* Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world. And *Job* (sure) was not without it, when he durst with such a confidence appeal to the thoughts that God himself had of him; even then when God was ransacking and searching every corner of his heart by his heavy hand, *Job 10. 7.* Thou knowest that I am not wicked; mark, he doth not deny he had sin in him, that you have again and again confessed by him; but that he was *not wicked*, i. e. a rotten-hearted hypocrite; this he will stand to, that God himself will not say so of him; though (for his tryal) the Lord gives way to have him search'd to stop the Devils mouth, and shame him, who was not afraid to lay suspicion of this spiritual felony to thy charge.

Object. But may be thou wilt say, these were Saints of the highest form, and though they might come to see their sincerity, and have this *white stone* in their bosomes; yet such Jewels cannot be expected to be worn by ordinary Christians.

Answ.

Ans. For answer to this, consider that the weakest Christian in Gods family hath the same witness in him that those had, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him.* Mark, 'tis indefinite, *every one that believeth*; not this eminent Christian, or that, but every one. *The witness*, the same Christ and Spirit dwell in thy heart, that do in the highest Saint on earth; the same blood thou hast to sprinkle, and the same water to wash thee; these can, and will (when the Lord pleases) testify as much for thy Grace and Sincerity as it doth for theirs. Only as Witnesses that are in a Court, stay till the Judge call them forth; then, and not till then, do they give their testimony; so do these, and God may, and doth use his liberty, when he will do this; as on the contrary, every wicked, impenitent Sinner carries a witness in his own bosome that will condemn him; but this doth not always speak, and presently make report of the sad news it hath to tell the Sinner, that is, when God calls a Court, and keeps his private Sessions in the Sinners soul, which is at his pleasure to appoint the time. Only means must not be neglected, of which I shall propose a few.

1. Reach forth Christian (for such I must call thee, whether thou wilt own the name or no) to further degrees of Grace. The more the Child grows up, the more it comes to its right complexion, and so doth grace. There is so much slavish fear, selfishness, with other imperfections at present (like so much scurf) on the face of this new-born babe of grace, that they do hide its true favour, which by degrees will wear off as it grows up; yea, the spiritual reason of a Christian ripens, as the whole body of Grace grows, whereby he is more capable, by reflecting on his own actions, to judge of the Objections Satan makes against his Sincerity; so that if you would not be always tossed to and fro with your own fluctuating thoughts, whether sincere or not, be not always Children in Grace, but grow up to higher stature, and thou wilt grow above many of thy fears; for, by the same light that thou findest the growth of thy grace, thou mayest see the truth of it also. Though it be hard in the *crepusculum*, or first break of day, to know whether it be day-light or night-light that shines; yet when you see the light evidently grow and unfold itself, you by that know it to be day. Paint doth not grow on the face fairer than it was, nor do the arms of a Child in a picture get strength by standing there months and years; does thy love, hope, humility, godly sorrow grow more and more (poor Soul,) and yet question what it is, whether true grace or not? this is as marvellous a thing, that thou shouldst not know what thy grace is, and whence, as it was that the *Jews* should not know who Christ was, when he had made a man born blind see so clearly, *Joh.* 9.

2. Readily embrace any call that God sends thee by his providence for giving a proof and experiment of thy Sincerity. There are some few advantages that God gives, which if embraced and improv'd, a man may come to know more his own heart, and the grace of God therein, than in

all his life besides. Now these advantages do lie wrapt in those seasons, wherein God more eminently calls us forth to deny our selves for his sake. Be but ready to entertain, and faithful to obey that heavenly call, and thou wilt know much of thy heart. Partly, because grace in such acts comes forth with such glory, that (as the Sun when it shines in a clear day) it exposeth it self more visibly to the eye of the Creature, as also because God chooseth such seasons as these for to give his testimony to the truth of his Childrens grace in, when they are most eminently exercising of it in this way. When does the Master speak kindly to his Servant, and commend him, but when he takes him most diligent in it? then he saith, *Well done good and faithful servant.* May be some time or other, God is calling thee to such an act of self-denial, wherein (if thou wilt answer Gods call) thou must trample upon some dear enjoyment or other, as credit, estate, may be a sweet Child, a dear Wife, yea, may be thou canst not do the work God calls thee to, but with hazard to them all, these and more too. Well friend, be not sick to think of thy great strait, or disquieted at the sight of his providence, that now stands at thy door; didst thou know what errand it comes about, thou wouldst invite it in, and make it as welcome as *Abraham* did the *three Angels*, whom he feasted in his Tent so freely. I'll tell thee what God sends it for; and that is, to bring thee to a sight of thy Sincerity, and acquaint thee with that grace of God in thee, which thou hast so long desired to see. This Providence brings thee a Chariot (to allude to *Josaphats* Waggon sent for old *Jacob*) wherein thou must be carried to see that grace alive, whose funeral thou hast so long kept in thy mournful soul, and does not thy spirit revive at the thought of any means whereby thou mayest obtain this? *Abraham*, he was call'd to offer up his son, and was about it in earnest; such a piece of self-denial God could not let pass without some mark of honour, and what is it he gives him, but his testimony to his uprightness? *Gen.* 22. 12. *Lay not thy hand upon the Lad, for now I know thou fearest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me.* Why? God knew this before; yes, but he speaks it that *Abraham* may hear, and take it from Gods mouth that he was sincere. May be thou art call'd to deny thy own education and principles suckt in by it; thy own company; cross the judgement of those thou highly esteamest; yea, thy own wisdom and reason to entertain a truth, or take up a practice merely upon the account of the Word; which if thou canst do, and that without affectation of singularity, or an humour of pride blowing thee that way, 'tis an act of deep self-denial, and goes most cross to the most ingenuous natures, who are afraid of drawing eyes after them, by leaving their company to walk in a path alone, yea very loth to oppose their judgement to others; more for number and parts than their own; in a word, who love peace so dearly, that they can be willing to pay any thing but a sin to purchase it; in these it must needs be great self-denial, and therefore such as have the greater

greater ground to expect Gods evidencing their sincerity to them. He did it to *Nathanael*, who had all these bars to keep him from coming to Christ, and believing on him; yet he did both, and Christ welcomes him with a high and loud testimony to his uprightness; *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*, John 1. 47. May be again; The thing God would have thee deny thy self in, is thy wrath and revenge; which to give thee a fair occasion to do with the greater demonstration of thy sincerity, he puts thy enemy into thy power, and lays him bound as it were under thy hand; yea, so orders it in his Providence, that thou mayest have thy will on him with little noise, or if it be known, yet the notorious wrongs he hath done thee, and some circumstances in the Providence that hath brought him into thy hand, concur to give thee an advantage of putting so handsome a colour upon the business, as shall apologize for thee in the thoughts of those that hear of it, making them especially (who look not narrowly into the matter) rather observe the justice of God on thy enemies judgement befel him, than thy injustice, and sin, who wert the instrument to execute it. Now, when the way lies smooth and fair for thee to walk in, and thy own corruption calls thee forth, yea, useth Gods Name in the matter, to make thee more confident, saying to thee, as they to *David*, 1 Sam. 24. *Behold, the day is come, wherein God hath delivered thy enemy into thy hand, that thou mayest do to him as seemeth good in thine eyes*: Now, if thou canst withstand the temptation, and instead of avenging thy self upon the person, thy enemy, revenge thy self on thy revenge (thy greater enemy of the two) by paying good into thy adversaries bosome for the evil he hath done thee; and when thou hast done this, canst scape another enemy in thy return (I mean Pride) so as to come out of the field an humble Conqueror, and consecrate the memorial of this victory, not to thy own, but praise of Gods Name, (as *Goliath's* sword, which was not kept by *David* at his own home, to shew what he had done, but in the *Taboracle*, behind the *Ephod*, as a memorial of what God had done by it in *David's* hand, 1 Sam. 21. 9.) thou hast done that which speaks thee sincere, yea, high graduate in this grace; and God will sooner or later let thee know so. *David's* same sounds louder for his victories got in the open field, over his slain enemies, than it doth for that he got in the *Cave* (though an obscure hole) over his own revenge, in sparing the life of *Saul*, (in which you have the case in hand every way fitted.) By the renown of his bloody battels; he got a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth, 2 Sam. 7. 9. But by this noble act of self-denial, he got a name, great, like unto the name of those that are famed for their holiness in the Scripture; and rather than *David* shall not have the commendation of this piece of his self-denial, God will send it to him in the mouth of his very enemy, who cannot hold (though by it he proclaims his own shame and wickedness) but he must justify him as a holy righteous man, 1 Sam. 24. 17. And he (that is *Saul*) said unto *David*, *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou*

hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

3. Continue thou to wait upon God in all the ways of his Ordinances, every one in their season; when-ever thou comest to get the comfortable sight of thy sincerity, it is the Spirit of God that must befriend thee in it, or else, like *Hagar*, thou mayest sit by the Well, and not find it; thou mayest round thy field again and again, but not find the treasure hid in it. It is the Spirit of God by which we know the things that are freely given us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. Now the Spirit sits in the Ordinances (as a Minister of State in his Office) whither we must resort, if we will have the truth of our graces (that are our evidences for Heaven) sealed to our consciences. Thither go therefore, yea, there wait, for thou knowest not (as the *Wise man* saith of sowing seed, *Eccles.* 11. 6.) whether thy waiting on this or that, now or then, shall prosper and be successful to thee for this end. It is enough to confirm, yea, quiet and comfort thee in thy attendance, that thou art at the right door, and though thou knockest long, and hearest no news of his coming, yet thou canst not stay so long (like *Eglon's* servants, *Judg.* 3. 25.) that thou need'st be alarmed. They indeed waited on a dead man, and might have stood long enough before he had heard them; but thou on a living God, that hears every knock thou givest at Heaven-gate with thy prayers and tears; yea, a loving God, that all this while he acts the part of a stranger (like *Joseph* to his brethren) yet is so big with mercy, that he will at last fall on thy neck, and ease his heart, by owning of thee, and his grace in thee. Lift up thy head then, poor drooping Soul, and go with expectation of the thing; but remember thou set'st not God the time: The Sun riseth at its own hour, whatever time we set it. And when God shall meet thee in an Ordinance, (as sometimes, no doubt, Christian, thou find'st a heavenly light irradiating, and influence quickening thy Soul while hearing the Word, or may be on thy knees wrestling with God,) this is a sweet advantage and season thou should'st improve for the satisfying thy Soul; as when the Sun breaks out, then we run to the Dial to know how the day goes; or when (as we are sitting in the dark) one brings a Candle into the room, then we bestir our selves to look for the thing we miss, and soon find what we in vain groped for in the dark; so mayest thou, poor Soul, (as many of thy dear Brethren and Sisters before thee have done) know more of thy spiritual state in a few moments at such a time, than in many a day when God withdraws; carefully therefore watch for such seasons, and improve them; but if God will hide thy treasure from thy sight, comfort thy self with this, God knows thy uprightness, though wrap'd up from thine own eye; say as *David*, *Psal.* 142. 2. *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.* And God will do with thee, not by the false accusations thou bringest in against thy self (as it is to be feared some have suffered at mens hands) but by the testimony which his All-seeing eye can give to thy grace.

CHAP. XVI.

wherein the second Reason of the Metaphor is open'd; why Sincerity is set out by the Souldiers Belt, viz. from the establishing and strengthening nature of this Grace, particularly, of a preserving strength it hath; with some special seasons wherein the Hypocrite falls off.

HAVING dispatch'd the first Reason why Sincerity is compared to the Souldiers Girdle or Belt, and discours'd of this Grace under that notion; We proceed to the second Ground or Reason of the Metaphor, taken from the other use of the Souldiers Girdle, which is to strengthen his Loyns, and fasten his Armour (over which it goes) close to him; whereby he is more able to march, and strong to fight. Girding in Scripture-phrase imports strength, *Plal. 18. 29. Thou hast girded me with strength unto battel: Job 12. 21. He weakeneth the strength of the mighty: in the Hebrew it is, he looseth their Girdle;* to which use of the Girdle, Sincerity doth bear a fit analogy. It is a Grace that establisheth and strengthens the Christian in his whole course; as, on the contrary, Hypocrisie weakens and unsettles the heart; *a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* As it is in Bodies, so in Souls. Earthly bodies, because mixt, are corruptible; whereas the Heavenly bodies, being simple and unmixt, they are not subject to corruption: so much a Soul hath of Heavens purity and incorruptibleness, as it hath of Sincerity. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, ἐν ἀποδοσίᾳ,* with incorruption, *Ephes. 6. 24.* The strength of every Grace lies in the sincerity of it; so that without any more ado, the point which offers it self to our consideration, from this second notion of the Girdle, is this;

Noe, That Sincerity doth not only cover all our other infirmities, but it is excellent, yea necessary to establish the Soul in, and strengthen it for its whole Christian warfare. *The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them, Prov. 11. 3.* The Hypocrite falls shamefully, and comes to naught with all his shifts and stratagems to save himself; whereas Sincerity carries that Soul safe, that dares follow its conduct above all dangers, though in the midst of them. But to open the point; There is a three-fold strength Sincerity brings with it, which the false hypocritical heart wants. 1. A preserving strength. 2. A recovering strength. 3. A comforting strength.

First, Sincerity hath a preserving strength to keep the Soul from the defilements of sin; when temptation comes on furiously, and chargeth the Soul home, a false heart is put to the run, it cannot possibly stand; we are told of Israel's hypocrisie, *Psal. 78. 8.* they were a generation that *set not their heart aright,* and what follows? *whose spirit was not steadfast with God;* stones that are not set right on the foundation, cannot stand strong or long: you may see more of this bitter fruit growing on the Hypocrites branches in the same *Psal. v. 56, 57. They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully;*

they were turned aside like a deceitful bow, when the bow is unbent, the rift it hath may be undiscern'd, but go to use it by drawing the arrow to the head, and it flies a pieces; thus doth a false heart when put to the tryal. As the Ape in the fable, drest like a man, when nuts are thrown before her, cannot then dissemble her nature any longer, but shews her self an Ape indeed; a false heart bewrays it self before 'tis aware, when a fair occasion is presented for its lust; whereas Sincerity keeps the Soul pure in the face of temptation. *Prov. 10. 9. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely;* that is, he treads strong on the ground, like one whose feet are found, though stones lie in his way, he goes over them safely; *but he that perverteth his way shall be known,* like one that hath some corn or other ail about his feet, though in green smooth way he may make a shift to go; yet when he meets with hobling stony way, he presently comes down, and falters. Now that this preserving strength, which Sincerity girds the Soul with, may better appear, it will be requisite to instance in some of those seasons wherein Sincerity keeps the Soul from the power of temptation as on the contrary, when Hypocrisie cowardly and tamely yields the Soul up into its hands.

First, A false heart usually starts aside, and yields to sin, when it can hide it self in a crowd, and have store of company, under which it may throw its self. The Hypocrite sets his Watch, not by the Sun, (the Word I mean) but by the Town-clock; what most do, that he'll be easily perswaded to do; *vox populi* is his *vox Dei*: therefore you seldom have him swim against the tide of corrupt times; light things are carried by the stream, and light spirits by the multitude. But the sincere Christian is massy and weighty; he'll sooner sink to the bottom, and yield to the fury of a multitude by suffering from them, than float after their example in sinning with them. The Hypocrite hath no inward principle to act him, and therefore like the dead fish, must drive with the current; But Sincerity being a principle of divine life, directs the Soul to its way, and improves it to walk in it, without the help of company to lean on, yea, against any opposition it meets. *Joshua* spake what was in his heart, when ten or twelve that were sent with him, perceiving on which side the wind lay, accommodated themselves to the humour of the people, *Numb. 14. 7.* The false Prophets pleading words with which they clawed *Ahab's* proud humour, could by no means be brought to fit good *Micaiah's* mouth, though he should make himself very ridiculous by chusing to stand alone, rather than fall in with so goodly a company, *four hundred Prophets,* who were all agreed of their verdict, *1 Kings 22.*

Secondly,

Secondly, A false heart yields, when sin comes with a bribe in its hand ; none but Christ, and such as know the truth, as it is in Jesus, can scorn the Devils offer, *Omnia hec dabo, All these will I give to thee.* The Hypocrite, let him be got Pinacle-high in his profession, yet will make haste down to his prey, if it lies fair before him ; one that carries not his reward in his bosome, that counts it not portion enough to have God and enjoy him, may be bought and sold by any huckster, to betray his Soul, God, and all. The Hypocrite, when he seems most devout, waits but for a better market, and then he'll play the Merchant with his profession ; there is no more difference betwixt an Hypocrite and an Apostate, than betwixt a green Apple and a ripe one, come awhile hence, and you will see him fall rotten-ripe from his profession. *Judas* a close Hypocrite, how soon an open Traytor ? And as fruit ripens sooner or later, as the heat of the year proves, so doth hypocrisie, as the temptation is strong or weak ; some Hypocrites go longer before they are discovered, than others ; because they meet not with such powerful temptations to draw out their corruptions. It is observ'd, that the fruits of the earth ripen more in a week, when the Sun is in conjunction with the Dog-Star, than in a month before ; When the Hypocrite hath a door opened by which he may enter into possession of that worldly prize he hath been projecting to obtain, now his lust within, and the occasion without, are in conjunction, and his day hastens wherein he will fall. The hook is baited, and he cannot but nibble at it. Now Sincerity preserves the Soul in this hour of temptation. *David* prays, *Psal. 26. 9.* that God would not gather his Soul with sinners, whose right hand is full of bribes ; such as for advantage, would be bribed to sin, to which wicked gang he opposeth himself, *ver. 11.* But as for me, I will walk in my integrity ; Where he tells us, what kept him from being corrupted and enticed, as they were, from God, it was his integrity ; a Soul walking in its integrity, will take bribes neither from men, nor sin it self ; and therefore he saith, *ver. 12.* My foot stood in an even place, or, as some read it, My foot standeth in righteousness.

Thirdly, The Hypocrite yields to the temptation, when he may sin without being controll'd by man, which falls out in a double case. First, When he may embrace his Lust in a secret corner, where the eye of man is not privy to it. Secondly, When the greatness of his place and power lifts him above the stroak of justice from mans hand ; In both these he discovers his baseness, but Sincerity preserves the Soul in both.

First, See how the Hypocrite behaves himself, when he thinks he is safe from mans sight. *Ananias* and *Sapphira's* care was to blind mans eye, by laying some of their Estate at the Apostles feet, and having made sure of this (as they thought) by drawing this curtain of their seeming-zeal between it and them, they pocket up the rest without trembling at, or thinking of Gods revenging eye looking on them all the while ; and boldly, when they have done this, present themselves to *Peter*, as if they were as good Saints as any in the company. The Hypocrite stands more of the saving of his credit in this World,

than the saving of his Soul in the other ; and therefore when he can ensure that, he'll not stick to venture the putting of the other to the hazard ; which shews he is either a flat Atheist, and doth not believe there is another World to save or damn his Soul in ; or on purpose stands aloof off the thoughts of it, knowing it is such a melancholy subject, and inconsistent with the way he is in, that he dares not suffer his own conscience to tell him what it thinks of it ; and so it comes to pass, that it hath no power to awe and sway him, because it cannot be heard to speak for it self. Now Sincerity preserves the Soul in this case ; it was not enough that *Josephs* Master was abroad, so long as his God was present. *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? Gen. 39. 8.* Mark, not against his Master, but against God ; Sincerity makes faithful to man, but for more than mans sake. *Joseph* serv'd his Master with eye-service ; he had God in his eye, when *Potiphar* had not him in his. Happy are those Masters that have any will serve them with this eye-service of sincerity.

Secondly, The Hypocrite, if he cannot get out of mans sight, yet may he but stand out of the reach of his arm and power, it is as well for his turn, and doth often discover him. How unworthily and cruelly dealt *Laban* with *Jacob*, cheating him in his Wife, oppressing him in his wages, by changing it ten times ? Alas, he knew *Jacob* was a poor shiftless creature, in a strange place, unable to contest with him, a great man in his Country. Some Princes, who before they have come to their power and greatness, have seem'd humble and courteous, kind and merciful, just and upright ; as soon as they have leap'd into the Saddle, got the reins of Government into their hand, and begun to know what their power was, have even rid their Subjects off their leggs with oppression and cruelty, without all mercy to their estates, liberties and lives ; such instances the History of the World doth sadly abound with ; even *Nero* himself, that played the part of a Devil at last, began so, that in the *Roman* hopes he was hugg'd for a State-Saint ; set but Hypocrisie upon the Stage of power and greatness, and it will not be long before its mask falls off. The Prophet meant thus much, when he made only this reply to *Hazaels* seeming abhorrency of what he had foretold concerning him, *2 Kings 8. 13.* The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be King over Syria ; as if he had said, *Hazael*, thou never yet didst sit in a Kings Chair, and knowest not what a discovery that will make of thy deceitful heart. Mark from whence *Rehoboams* revolt from God is dated, *2 Chron. 12. 1.* It came to pass when *Rehoboam* had established the Kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the Law of the Lord. Policy had him conceal his intentions, while he had settled himself in his Throne, lest he should have hazarded his Crown ; but that set on fire, and his party made strong, now all breaks out ; like a false Captain who victuals his Castle, and furnisheth it with all kind of provision and ammunition, and then, and not till then, declares himself a Traytor, when he thinks he is able to defend his treason. But here also Sincerity preserves the gracious

soul; two famous instances we have for this, one in Joseph, who had his unnatural brethren, that would once have taken away his life; yea, who did that which might have proved worse, for all that they knew, (barbarously sell him as a slave into a strange land;) these he had strangely brought into his hands, while he was in all his honour and power in Egypt; and now when he might have paid them in their own coin, without any fear or controul from man, behold this holy man is lift above all thoughts of revenge; he pays their cruelty in his own tears, not in their blood; he weeps over them for joy to see them, that once had no joy till they had rid their hands of him; yea, when their own guilt made them afraid of his presence, measuring him by their own revengeful hearts, how soon doth he deliver them from all fears of any evil intended by him against them? yea, he will not allow them to darken the joy, which that day had with them brought to him, so much as by expressing their own grief before him, for their old cruelty to him; so perfect a conquest had he got of all revenge, Gen. 45. 5. And what preserv'd him in his hour of great temptation? he told them, Gen. 42. 18. *This do and live, for I fear God*; as if he had said, though you be here my prisoners at my will and mercy, for all that you can do to resist, yet I have that which binds my hands and heart too, from doing or thinking you evil. *I fear God*. This was his preservative, he sincerely fear'd God. The other

instance is *Nehemiah*, Governour of that Colony of Jews, which under the favour of the Persian Princes were again planting their native Country; by his place he had an advantage of oppressing his brethren, if he durst have been so wicked, and from those that had before him been honour'd with that office, he had examples of such as could not only swallow the common allowance of the Governour, without rising in their Consciences (which shew'd a digestion strong enough, considering the peeled state of the Jews at that time) but could when themselves had suckt the milk, let their cruel servants suck the blood of this poor people also by illegal exactions; so that *Nehemiah* coming after such oppressors, if he had taken his allowance, and but eased them of the other burdens which they groaned under, no doubt he might have pass'd for merciful in their thoughts; but he durst not go so far. A man may possibly be an oppressor in exacting his own. *Nehemiah* knew they were not in case to pay, and therefore he durst not require it. But as one who comes after a bad husband that hath driven his land, and suck'd out the heart of it, casts it up fallow for a time till it recovers its lost strength, so did *Nehemiah* spare this oppressed people; and what, I pray, was it preserv'd him from doing as the rest had done? See *Nehem. 5. 15. Be I did not so, because of the fear of the Lord*. The man was honest, his heart toucht with a sincere fear of God, and this kept him right.

CHAP. XVII.

Of a recovering strength that Sincerity hath, and whence:

SEcondly, Sincerity hath a recovering strength with it; when it doth not priviledge from falling, yet it helps up again, whereas the Hypocrite lies where he falls, and perisheth where he lies; who therefore is said to fall into mischief, Prov. 24. 16. The sincere soul falls as a Traveller may do, by stumbling at some stone in his path, but gets up, and goes on his way with more care and speed; the other falls, as a man from the top of a Mast, that is ingulphed, past all recovering in the devouring Sea. He falls as *Haman* did before *Mordecai*, when he begins, he stays not, but falls till he can fall no lower. This we see in *Saul*, whose heart was never right; when once his naughty heart discovered it self, he tumbled down the hill apace, and stopt not, but from one sin went to a worse; and in a few years you see how far he was got from his first Stage, where he first took his leave of God. He that should have told *Saul*, when he betrayed his distrust and unbelief, in not staying the full time for *Samuel's* coming (which was the first wry step taken notice of in his Apostasie) that he, who now was so hot for the worship of God, that he could not stay for the Prophets coming, would ere long quite give it over, yea, fall from enquiring of the Lord, to ask counsel of the Devil, by seeking to

a Witch, and from seeking counsel of the Devil, should at the last and worst Act of his bloody Tragedy, with his own hands throw himself desperately into the Devils mouth by self-murder: Surely he would have stranged at it more than *Hazael* did at the plain Character *Elisha* gave of him to his face. And truly all the account we can give of it, is, that his heart was naught at first; which *Samuel* upon that occasion hinted to him, 1 Sam. 13. when he told him, *the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart*; *David* he meant, who afterward fell into sin greater, as to the matter of the fact, than that for which *Saul* was rejected of God, and yet having but an habitual Sincerity, as the root of the matter in him, happily recovered out of it, for want of which, hypocritical *Saul* miscarried finally; so true is that Proverb, that *frost and fraud have dirty ends*; Now there is a double reason for this recovering strength of Sincerity; one taken from the nature of Sincerity it self; the other from the promise by God settled on the Soul where Sincerity is found.

First, From the nature of Sincerity it self; Sincerity is to the soul, as the soul is to the body: It is a spark of divine life kindled in the bosome of the creature by the Spirit of God. It is the seed of God remaining

remaining in the Saint, 1 John 3. 9. Now as the seed cast into the womb of the Earth, and quickened there by the influence of Heaven upon it, doth put forth its head fresh and green in the Spring, after many a cold nip it hath had from the Winter; so doth sincere grace after temptations and falls, when God looks out upon it with the beams of his exciting grace: but the hypocrite wanting this inward principle of life, doth not so; he is a Christian by Art, not by a new Nature, drest up like a Puppet, in the fashion and outward shape of a man, that moves by the simmers which the workman fastens to it, and not inform'd by a Soul of its own; and therefore as such an Image, when worn by time, or broken by violence, can do nothing to renew it self, but crumbles away by piece-meals, till it comes at last to nothing; so doth the Hypocrite waste in his profession without a vital principle to oppose his ruine that is coming upon him. There is great difference between the wool on the Sheeps back, which thorn, will grow again, and the wool of the Sheeps skin on a Wolfs back; clip that, and you shall see no more grow in its room. The sincere Christian is the Sheep, the Hypocrite is the Wolf clad in the Sheeps skin; the application of it is obvious.

Secondly, The sincere Soul is under a promise, and promises are restorative, Psal. 19. 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, Hebr. restoring the Soul.* It fetcheth back the Soul to life, as a strong Cordial one in a fainting fit, which vertue is proper to the promissary part of the Word, and therefore so to be taken in this place. Now the sincere Soul is the only right heir of the promises. Many sweet promises are laid in for the assuring succour and auxiliary aid to bring them off all their dangers and temptations, Prov. 28. 18. *Who so walketh uprightly shall be saved.* Now mark the opposition, *but he that is perverse shall fall at ones;* that is, suddenly, irrecoverably, Job 8. 20. *God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he*

help the evil doers; he will not take them by the hand, *Hebr. that is, to help them up when they fall;* Nay, the Hypocrite is not only destitute of a promise for his help, but lyes also under a curse from God. Great pains we find him take to rear his house, and when he hath done, *leans on it, but it shall not stand; he holds it fast, but it shall not endure,* Job 8. 15. *A little that the righteous hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,* Psal. 37. 16. But why? See the reason, ver. 17, 18. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholdereth the righteous.* The righteous man in that Psalm is the upright; by the wicked is meant the Hypocrite. A little true grace mix'd with much corruption in the sincere Christian, is better than the Hypocrites riches (great faith, zeal and devotion) he braggs so of. The former hath the blessing of the promise to recover it when decaying; these the curse of God threatening to blast them, when in their greatest pomp and glory. The Hypocrites doom is to grow worse and worse; 2 Tim. 2. 13. Those very Ordinances which are effectual (through the blessing of the promise) to recover the sincere Soul, being cursed to the Hypocrite, give him his bane and ruine. The word, which opens the eyes of the one, puts out the eyes of the other; as we find in the hypocritical Jews, to whom the Word was sent to *make them blind,* Esay 6. 9, 10. It melts and breaks the sincere Soul, as in *Josiah,* 2 Kings 22. 19. but meeting with a naughty false heart, it hardens exceedingly; as appear'd in the same Jews, *Jerem. 42. 20.* before the Sermon they speak fair, *Whatever God saith, they will do;* but when Sermon is done, they are further off than ever, from complying with the command of God. The Hypocrite he hears for the worse, prays for the worse, fasts for the worse; every Ordinance is a wide door, to let Satan in more fully to possess him, as Judas found the sop.

CHAP. XVIII.

Sincerity

Of a supporting and comforting property Sincerity hath, shewn in several particular Instances.

THirdly, Sincerity hath a supporting, comforting vertue; It lifts the head above water, and makes the Christian float a top the waves of all troubles, with a holy presence, and gallantry of spirit, Psal. 11. 24. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness;* not only light after darkness, when the night is past, but in darkness also; *Out of the eater comes meat, and out of the strong, sweetness.* Those afflictions which feed on, yea, eat out of the Hypocrites heart, the sincere Soul can feed on them, suck sweetness from them, yea, hath such a digestion, that he can turn them into high nourishment both to his grace and comfort. A naughty heart is merry only while his carnal cheer is before him, Hosea 2. 11. *God tells Israel, he will take away her feasts, and all her mirth shall cease;* Her joy is taken away

with the cloth; Sincerity makes the Christian sing, when he hath nothing to his supper. David was in none of the best case when in the Cave, yet we never find him merrier; his heart makes sweeter musick than ever his Harp did, Psal. 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise;* The Hypocrites joy, like the strings of musical Instruments, crack in wet weather; but Sincerity keeps the Soul in tune in all weathers: They are unsound bodies that sympathize with the season, chearly in fair, but ill and full of aches in foul; so the unsound heart, a few pinching Providences set him going, kill him as a sharp Winter doth weak bodies; whereas the sincere Soul, never is more hail, never more comfortable; afflictions do him but this courtesy, to call in his affections, which in the Summer

of prosperity were possibly too much diffused and scattered among creature-delights, and unite them more entirely and closely upon Christ, into whose bosom it goes as directly when storms come, as the Bee to its hive; and he must needs be comfortable, that hath so soft a pillow to lay his head on as Christs lap; Sincerity keeps the Souls mouth open, to receive the sweet consolations that drop from Word and Spirit; indeed all the promises are directed to such. But hypocrisy is like the squinancy in the throat of the sick man, he burns within, and can get nothing down to quench the fire which his sins have kindled in his Soul. Conscience tells him, when sweet promises are offer'd, these are not for me, I have dealt falsely with God and man; it is the sincere soul God invites, but I am a rotten-hearted Hypocrite: And how much short comes such a poor wretch of *Dives* his misery in hell, I pray? *Dives* burns, and hath not a drop to quench his tongue. The Hypocrite in affliction he burns too, and hath indeed, not a drop, but a river, a fountain full of water; yea, of blood presented to him, but he cannot drink it down, he cannot make any use of it for his good; his teeth are set so close no key can open them, his hypocrisy stares him in the face, it lies like a mastiff at his door, and will suffer no comfort to come near him; and which is worse, he that hath no bread, or he that hath and cannot eat it? none so witty and cunning as the Hypocrite in prosperity to ward off the reproaches, to shift from the counsels of the Word; and in affliction, when Conscience awakes, none so skilful to dispute against the comforts of the Word. Now he is Gods close prisoner, no comfort can come at him; if God speak terror, who can speak peace? *Eam. 3. 65. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them*; sorrow of heart is the Hypocrites curse from God in affliction, and what God lays on, sticks close. The word for sorrow in the Hebrew signifies a shield that fenceth, and covers over, and doth (saith one upon this place) denote the disease Physicians call *Cardiaca passio*, which so oppresth the heart, that is covered *sicut scuto*, as with a shield or lid over it, and keeps all relief from the heart; such is the sorrow of the Hypocrite in affliction, when once his Conscience awakes, and God fills him with the amazing thoughts of his own sins, and Gods wrath pursuing him for them. But I shall descend to instance in a few particular kinds of afflictions, and shew what comfort attends Sincerity in them all.

SECT. I.

First, Sincerity supports and comforts the Soul under reproaches from men. These are no petty tryals: they are reckon'd among the Saints martyrdoms, *Heb. 11. 36.* called there *cruel mockings*; yea, not unworthy to be recorded among the sufferings of Christ; the matchless patience and magnanimity of his Spirit, appeared not only in enduring the Cross; but in despising the shame, which the foul tongues of his bloody enemies loaded him unmercifully with; mans aspiring mind can least brook

shame; credit and applause is the great Idol of men that stand at the upper end of the World for parts or place; give but this, and what will not men do or suffer? One wiser than the rest, could see this proud humour in *Diogenes*, that endured to stand naked, embracing a heap of snow while he had spectators about him to admire his patience (as they thought it) and therefore was ask'd, *Whether he would do thus, if he had none to see him*: The Hypocrite is the greatest credit-monger in the World, 'tis all he lives on almost, what the breath of mens praise sends him in; when that fails, his heart faints; but when it turns to scorn and reproaches, then he dyes, and needs must, because he has no credit with God, while he is scorn'd by man; whereas Sincerity bears up the Soul against the wind of mans vain breath, because it hath Conscience, and GOD himself to be his compurgator, to whom he dare appeal from mans bar. O how sweetly do a good Conscience, and the Spirit of God witnessing with it, feast the Christian at such a time! and no matter for the hail of mans reproaches that rattle without, while the Christian is so merry within doors. *David* is a pregnant instance for this, *Psal. 41. 11. By this I know that thou favour'st me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me*; How *David*? does not thy enemy triumph over thee? I pray see the condition he at present was in; he had fallen into a great sin, and the hand of God was in him in a disease, chastising him for it, as appears, *vers. 4.* his enemies from this take advantage to speak him all to naught; *vers. 5. Mine enemies speak ill of me*, no doubt, charging him for an Hypocrite; when they come to visit him, it is but to gather some matter of reproach, which they presently blab abroad, *vers. 6.* yea, they are not ashamed to say, *vers. 8.* that an evil disease, or as it is in the Hebrew, *a thing of Belial* (that is his sin) cleaveth to him; now God hath met with him, now he lieth, he shall rise no more; yea, his familiar friend, in whom he trusted, serves him as ill as the worst of his enemies, *vers. 9.* was ever poor man lower? and yet can he say his enemy triumphs not over him? His meaning therefore we must take thus; That notwithstanding all these reproaches cast upon him, yet his spirit did not quail, this was above them all; God kept that up, and gave him such inward comfort, as wiped off their scorn as fast as they threw it on; their reproaches fell (as sometimes we see snow) melting as fast as they fell, none lay upon the Spirit to load and trouble it. And how came *David* by this holy magnanimity of Spirit, these inward comforts? *vers. 12.* he tells us, *As for me, thou upholdest me in my integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever*. As if he had said, thou dost not by me, O Lord, as mine enemies do; they pick out my worst, and revile me for it; if there be but one sore place, one sinful part of my life, like flies, they light there; but thou overlookest my sinful slips and failings, pardoning them; and takest notice of my uprightness, which amidst all my infirmities thou upholdest, and so settest me before thy face, communicating thy love and favour to me notwithstanding the sins that

that are found mingled with my course of Obedience; this kept up the holy mans spirit, and makes him end the Psalm joyfully, *vers. 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.* We live (Christians) in reproaching times; he that is so over-dainty of his name, that he cannot bear to see some dirt, and that good store too, cast upon his back by reviling tongues, must seek a path to travel in by himself to Heaven; but, for thy comfort (Christian) Sincerity, though it cannot privilege thee from travel's fare, and keep thee from being dashed with calumnies, yet it will do thee this kind office, that the dirt which lights on thy coat shall not soak into thy Soul to damp thy joy, and chill thy inward comfort. Reproaches without may be comfortably endured, yea triumphantly worn as a Crown, if they meet not with a reproaching Conscience within. Yea, Sincerity will do more than this comes to, it will not only comfort thee under the *persecution of the tongue, but hand also*; not only quench the fire, which from thence is spit on thy face, by tongues set on fire by Hell; but it will comfort thee in the very mouth of fire it self, if God shall suffer thee by persecutors to be cast into it; Sincerity makes thee indeed fearful to sin; O, thou darest not touch one of these coals; but it will make thee bold to burn, and even hug joyfully the flames of martyrdom when call'd to them. So little afraid was that sincere servant of Christ, an Italian Martyr, Mr. Fox records, among many other undaunted Champions of the Truth, that when the Magistrate of the place (where he was to be burned) and the Officers of the Bishop that condemned him, were in a hot contest, wrangling which of them should pay for the wood that should make the fire for his burning; he presently sent to desire them, *They would not fall out upon that occasion, for he would take off the burden from them both, and be at the cost himself.* Blessed Soul! he made not so much ado of spending his blood and sacrificing his life, as they about a few pence wickedly to procure the same.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Sincerity girds the Soul with comforting strength, when conflicting with affliction from the hand of God. Many are the sorts of afflictions with which God exerciseth his sincere servants; to name a few;

First, When the Lord toucheth his outward man, by sickness; or his inward man, by spiritual conflicts; Sincerity is a comfortable companion in both. The Hypocrite, above all, fears falling into Gods hands, and well he may, for he is able to do him most hurt: therefore no sooner God takes hold of his collar, either of these ways, but his joy gives up the ghost; he, like some murderer (whose doom is writ plain in the Law) gives himself for a dead man, when once he is clapt up in prison. This made Job such a wonderling to his Wife, because he held up his holy course, when batter'd so sadly by the afflicting hand of God, with renewed afflictions; *Dost thou yet hold thy integrity?* what, nothing but

blows from Gods hand, and yet continue to bless him? this was strange to her, but not to him, who could call her *foolish woman* for her pains; but not charge God foolishly for all he smarted so under his hand: Sincerity enables the Christian to do two things in this case, which the Hypocrite cannot. To speak good of God, and to expect good from God; and the Soul cannot be uncomfortable, though head and heart ake together, which is able to do these.

First, Sincerity enables the Christian to think and speak well of God. A false-hearted Hypocrite, his countenance falls, and his heart rises, yea, swells with venome against God, though he dare not always let it drive out of his mouth, yet he has bloody thoughts against him in his heart. Hast thou found me, O my enemy? saith the wretch; he loves not God, and therefore a good thought of God cannot dwell in his soul; all that God has done for him, though never so bountifully, 'tis forgotten, and imbitter'd with the overflowing of his gall at the present dealings of God to him, he frets and fumes; you shall hear him sooner curse God, than charge himself; but the sincere soul nourisheth most sweet and amiable apprehensions of God, which bind him to the peace, that he dare not think or speak unbeseeming the glory or goodness of God, as we see in David, *Plal. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou Lord did'st it.* This holy man had a breach made both in his body and spirit at this time; he was sick and sad, yet he remembers from whose hand the blow came: *Thou Lord did'st it:* Thou, whom I love dearly, and so can take it kindly; thou, whom I have offended, and so take it patiently; yea, thou, who mightest have cast me into a bed of flames, instead of my bed of sickness, and therefore I accept thy correction thankfully. Thus he catches at the blow, without retorting it back upon God, by any quarrelling discontented language.

Secondly, Sincerity enables the soul to expect good from God, when his hand presseth hardest on body or soul, *Psalms 38.* Never was David in a worse case for body and soul; it would break a flinty heart to read the sad moans that this throbbing soul makes, in the anguish of his flesh, and bitter agony of his spirit; one would have thought they had been the pangs of a soul going away in despair; yet even in this great storm, we find him casting out his sheath-anchor of hope, and that takes sure hold of God for his mercy, *vers. 15. In thee O Lord do I hope, thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.* This expectation of good from God, corrects and qualifies the bitterness that is upon his palate, from his present sorrow; so *Psalms 40. 17. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* My state at present is sad enough, but my comfort is, I am not cast out of his mind, I know his thoughts are at work to do me good. Holy Job proves that he is not an Hypocrite (as his Friends uncharitably charged him) by this confidence he had on God in the depth of all his afflictions, *Job 13. 15, 16. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will maintain my ways before him, he also shall be my salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him.* As if he had said, if

if I were not sincere, I durst not appeal thus to God, and comfortably believe, while God is killing of me, that he would yet save me; *for an hypocrite shall not come before him*; that is, he dare not thus trust himself in Gods hands, and acquiesce in his promise when his neck is on the block, and Gods knife at his throat; No, if he could, he would never come in his sight; his conscience tells him, God knows him too well, to intend him any good; and therefore when God begins to lay his hand on him, (except his conscience be dedolent and seared, which is the curse that God now and then brands the gross Hypocrite with) he presently hath the scent of Hell-fire in his Soul, in a fearful expectation thereof; and looks on these present afflictions, though but a cloud of a hand-breadth, as those which will spread further and further, till the shades of that everlasting night overtake, and encompass him in Hells utter darkness.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Sincerity comforts the Christian, when he wants success visibly to crown his endeavours in his place and calling. A great affliction no doubt to a gracious Soul; As, when a Minister of the Gospel spends his strength, and swails out his life to a gain-saying people, that sit like stocks and stones under his Ministry, no more moved than the seats they sit on, and the pillars they lean to, ignorant and prophane he found them, and such he sees he is like to leave them, after twenty years may be almost twice told, spent among them. This must needs be a heart-aking tryal to one, that God hath given a compassionate heart to Souls. It costs the Mother no small pains to bring forth a living child, but what are the bitter throes of one that travels with a dead child? Such is the travel of a poor Minister with a dead-hearted people, yet the portion of none of the meanest of Gods messengers; indeed God sets his most eminent servants about the hardest work.

Now Sincerity lightens this affliction, and sends in that which may cheer the Soul under it. Paul saw he should not carry all to Heaven with him he preacht unto, to many the Gospel was a *favour of death unto death*. The sweet perfume of the Gospel proved a deadly scent to hasten and heighten their damnation; this could not be but sad to so tender a Physician, to see his Patients dye under his hands; Yet he thanks God, that makes him triumph in Christ, 2 Cor. 2. 14. But how can he do this? Poor Souls drop to Hell from under his Pulpit hearing him, and he triumph? This is as strange as to see the Father follow his Childs mournful Hearse, not weeping, but singing and dancing. Mark, and the wonder will cease; he doth not triumph that they perish, but that he is not guilty of their blood; not that they are damned, but that he sincerely endeavoured their salvation, *vers. 17. For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* Had Paul drop'd some wild gourd of error into his Doctrine, or mingled some ingredient of his own, with what Christ the great Physician had ordered,

he would have had little list to triumph; but preaching pure Gospel, and that purely, with a sincere heart, he might triumph in Christ, that made him faithful, and shall triumph over them, when he meets them again at the great day at the bar of Christ, where, to their face he shall witness against them, and vote with Christ for their eternal destruction. Me-thinks I hear all the faithful Ministers of Christ, giving an account to him, on whose errand they were sent, in the language of *Jeremiah's* prayer, *Jer. 17. 16. Lord, we have not desired this woeful day thou knowest*, which now hath taken hold of these wretched Souls, and which we warn'd them of; that which came out of our lips (in our preaching to them) was right before thee; the life of their Souls was dear and precious to us; we could have sacrificed our temporal lives to save the eternal life of their Souls; but nothing we could say or do, would stay them, to Hell they would go, over all the prayers, tears and intreaties out of thy Word, which stood in their way. This will make the sincere Ministers of Christ lift up their head with joy, and such forlorn wretches hang down their heads with shame to look Christ or them in the face, though now they can brazen it out with an impudent fore-head. So for Parents and Masters; Sincerity in your Relations will comfort you, though you see not your seed come up, which you have sown upon them in your godly examples, holy instructions, and seasonable corrections. David was one that *walk'd in his house with a perfect heart*, *Psal. 101. 2.* careful in the nurture of his Children, as appears in his pious counsel to Solomon, 2 Chron. 28. 9. (though not without failings.) But many of his Children were none of the best; one incestuous, another imbrewing his hands in his Brothers blood, a third catching at his Crown trayterously while his Father was alive, which made this holy man sadly fore-see how the squares would go when he was dead and gone; yet in this great disorder of his family, how comfortable do we find him on his dying-bed? *Though my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. Surely he had done his duty sincerely, this was his evidence for his interest in the Covenant, and the Covenant was all his desire and salvation.

In a word, in times of publick calamity, when the flood of Gods wrath comes rowling in upon a Nation, like waves, irresistably at the wide breach, which the high crying sins of the times make, and the few righteous that are found upon the place, labour to stand in the gap, by their prayers begging the life of the Nation; but God will not hear, (for so it sometimes falls out, though they were like *Nathan, Job, and Daniel*, greatly beloved of God, that no bayl will be taken for a Nation under arrest of Gods judgements;) even then Sincerity will be a sweet support, while we share with others in the common calamity. *Jeremiah*, he bestir'd him zealously for God, in testifying against the sins of the times, and for the people faithfully and earnestly with God by prayer; but he could neither convert them by his preaching, nor divert the wrath of God by his praying. The Jews bid him hold his peace, and proph-

phesie no more against them: God stops his mouth also, and bids him pray no more for them. Now in this dismal state of things, what easeth his sorrowful heart, swoln with grief for their sins and judgments hastening upon them, like an Eagle to her prey? Truly nothing can, but the remembrance of his Sincerity to God and man in those debauched times, Jer. 18. 20. *Remember that I stood up before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.* As if he had said, O Lord, though I cannot prevail with this rebellious generation to repent of their sins, or with thy Majesty, to repent of thy wrath gone out by an irreversibile decree against them; yet, remember that I have been faithful in my place both to thee and them; whereas on the contrary, horror and amazement of spirit is the portion (in such times of publick calamity) of hypocrites, as we see in *Pashur*, Jer. 20. who was a man that bare great sway at Court in *Jeremiah's* time, a bitter enemy to him, and the message he brought from God to the *Jews*, labouring to sooth up the King and Princes with vain hopes of golden days coming: (point-blank against the Word of the Lord, in the mouth of *Jeremiah*) and what becomes of him when the storm falls on that unhappy people? *Jeremiah* tells him his doom, *vers. 4.* that God will make him a *Major Massabib*, a terrour to himself; He should not only share in the common calamity, but have a brand of Gods especial wrath set upon him above others.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Sincerity girds the Christian with strength of comfort, when deprived of those opportunities which sometimes God had intrusted him with for serving of him. An affliction (considered in itself) so grievous to a gracious soul, that he knows none he fears more; he could choose any (might he be his own carver) before it: to be poor, disgraced, persecuted, any thing, rather than be laid aside as a broken instrument, unserviceable to his God. Indeed he values his life, and all the comforts of it, by the opportunities they afford for the glorifying God. *David* stops the mouth of his soul, which began to whisper some discontented language, with this, that he should yet praise God, *Psal. 42.* *Why art thou disquieted O my soul? I shall yet praise him.* All is well with *David*, and no cause of disquiet in his soul (whatever besides goes cross to him) may he but praise God, and have opportunity of glorifying him. *Joseph*, when God had so strangely raised him pinnacle-high, as I may say, to honour in a strange Land, he doth not bless himself in his preferment, carnally to think how great a man he is, but interprets the whole series of Providence, bringing him at last to that place (wherein he stood compeer to a mighty King) to be no other than giving him an opportunity of being eminently serviceable to God in the preservation of his Church, which was at that time contain'd in his fathers family. God hath sent me hither (saith he) before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by

a great deliverance, *Gen. 45. 7.* This holy man made his place give place to the work, he was call'd to do in it for God, counting the honour of his honour, to lie in the opportunity he had by it, of serving God and his Church. It must therefore needs be a sad affliction to a Saint, when such opportunities are taken from him, that at any time he hath enjoy'd. But Sincerity can make good work of this also, if God will have it so. 'Tis sad to the Christian to be laid aside, but it is comfortable to him to remember, that when he was not, he did not melt his talents away in sloth, or waste them away in riot, but was faithful in improving them for God; he counts it his affliction that God employs him not as he hath done; but he is not sorry that God can do his work without him; yea, it is a sweet comfort to him, as he lives at the graves mouth, to think that the glory of God shall not go down to the grave with him; though he dyes, yet God ~~likes~~ to take care of his own work; and it is not the cracking of one string, or all, that can marr the musick of Gods providence, who can perform his pleasure without using any creature for his instrument. In a word, 'tis sad to him to be taken from any work, wherein he might more eminently glorifie God; yet this again comforts him, that God counts that done, which the Christian sincerely desires to do. *David's* good will in desiring to build the Temple, was as much in Gods account, as if he had done it; many shall be at the last day rewarded by Christ, for cloathing and feeding the poor, who when on earth had neither cloaths nor bread to give, yet having had a heart to give, shall be reckon'd amongst the greatest benefactors to the poor. This appears from *Math. 25. 34.* where Christ is represented, speaking not to some few Saints that had great estates to bestow on charitable uses, but to all his Saints, poor as well as rich; *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdoms prepared for you, &c. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.* Mark, not ye that were rich, but ye, that is, all, such as had bread, you gave that out; you that had not bread or money to give, (when you could not draw out your purse, you) yet drew out your souls to the hungry; Hear this, O ye precious souls that God hath made sincere, and take comfort. May be you stand low in the World, your calling is mean, your estate next to nothing, which makes you little regarded by your neighbours that over-top you. Canst thou say, though thou beest but a servant to some poor Coffer, that thou desirest to walk in the truth of thy heart, approving thy self to God in thy whole course? This Bird will sing as sweet a note in thy breast, as if thou wert the greatest Monarch in the World. That which brings comfort to the greatest Saint in a time of distress, is the same which comforts the meanest in the family, and that is the love and favour of God, interest in Christ, and the precious promises, which in him are *Tea and Amen*. Now Sincerity is the best evidence for our title to those. It will not be so much insisted on, whether much or little hath been done by us, as whether that

much

much or little were in sincerity. *Well done good and faithful servant*, not *Well done*; thou hast done great things, ruled States and Kingdoms, been a famous Preacher in thy time, &c. but thou hast been faithful; and that thou mayest be, that stand'st in the obscurest corner of the World. Good *Hezekiah* knew this, and therefore on his

sick-bed he doth not tell God of his great services he had done, (though none had done more) but only desires God to take notice of the truth and sincerity of his heart, *Remember that I have walk'd before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*, *Ezay* 38. 3.

CHAP. XIX.

A brief Applicatory Improvement of the Point, both in general and particular branches also.

IT remains that the Point be applied in its several branches, which were three; Sincerity hath a preserving strength, a restoring strength, and a comforting strength. But for quick dispatch, we shall do it under two heads, clapping the two former into one.

Use 1. First, Therefore hath Sincerity a strengthening virtue, whereby it either preserves the Soul from falling into sin, or helps the Christian fallen, up again.

First, This affords thee (*Christian*) a further discovery of thy heart, whether sincere or not; put it here upon the tryal. Dost thou find a power imparted to thee, whereby thou art enabled to repel a temptation to sin, when thou hast no weapon left thee to defend thee against it, but the command forbidding it, or some arrow taken out of the quiver of the Gospel, such as the love of Christ to thee, thy love to him, and the like? May be the temptation is laid so cunningly, that thou mayest sin, and save thy credit too, having a back-door open to let thee in to it secretly. Thou shalt hazard nothing apparently of thy temporal concernment; yea, rather greatly advantage it, if thou wilt hearken to the motion: Only God stands up to oppose it, his Spirit tells thee, it is against his glory, inconsistent with the duty thou owest, and love thou professest to him. Now, speak what thou thinkest of sinning, the case thus stated; canst thou yet stand it out valiantly, and tell Satan, Sin is no match for thee, till thou canst have Gods consent, and reconcile sinning against him, and loving of him together? If so, bless God that hath given thee a sincere heart, and also for opening such a window as this in thy Soul, through which thou mayest see that grace to be there, which seen, is the best evidence that God can give thee for thy interest in him, and life everlasting with him. Wert thou an Hypocrite, thou could'st no more resist a sin so offer'd, than powder fire, or chaffe the wind.

Again, When thou art run down by the violence of temptation, what is the behaviour of thy Soul in this case? Dost thou rally thy routed forces, and again make head against thy enemy, so much the more eagerly, because foyled so shamefully? Or art thou content to sit down quietly by thy loss, and choose rather to be a tame slave to thy lust, than to be at any further trouble to continue the war? The false heart indeed is soon cowed, quickly yields subjection to the Conquerour; but the sincere Christi-

an gets heart, even when he loseth ground; uprightness makes the soul rebound higher in holy purposes against sin, by its very falls into sin. *Job* 40. 5. *Once have I spoken, (he means foolishly, sinfully) but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* This made holy *David* beg of God to be spared a little, that he might have time to recover his strength before he went hence; loth he was to go beaten out of the field, might he but live to recover his losses, by repentance of, and some victory over, those sins that had weakened and worsted him, then Death should be welcome; Like that brave Captain, who wounded in fight, desired some to hold him up, that he might but see the enemy run before he died, and he should close his eyes in peace. Deal therefore impartially with thy own Soul, which way do thy falls and failings work? If they wear off the edge from thy conscience, that it is not so keen and sharp in its reproofs for sin, if they bribe thy affections, that thou beginnest to comply with those sins with which formerly thy contest was, and likest pretty well their acquaintance, thy heart is not right; but if still thy heart meditates a revenge on thy sin that hath overpowred thee, and it lies on thy spirit, (like undigested meat on a sick stomach) thou canst have no ease and content to thy troubled Soul, till thou hast clear'd thy self of it, as to the reigning power of it; truly then thou discoverest a sincere heart.

Use 2. Secondly, This shews of what importance it is to labour for Sincerity; without it we can neither stand against, nor rise when we fall into temptation; whatever thou begg'st of God, forget not a sincere heart. *David* saw need of more of this grace than he had, *Psal.* 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew in me a right spirit*; and happy was it for him he had so much, as to make him desire more of it: What folly is it to build a house with beams on fire? The Hypocrites building must needs come to nought, there is a fire unquench'd, the power of hypocrisy unmortified, that will consume all his goodly profession; he carries into the field a heart that will deliver him up into his enemies hands. And he is sure to be overcome, to whom his own side is not true.

Use 3. Thirdly, Bless God, O sincere Christian, for this grace; it is a blessing invaluable, Crowns and Diadems are not to be compared with it. In this, thou hast a heart after Gods own heart; a heart to his liking; yea, a heart to his likeness. Nothing makes

makes thee liker God in the simplicity and purity of his nature, than Sincerity. Truth is that God glories in; he is a God of truth. When *Haman* was bid to say what should be done to the man that the King delighted to honour, he thinking the King meant no other than himself, would flie as high as his ambition could carry him, and what doth he choose, but to be cloath'd with the Kings own apparel royal? When God gives thee sincerity, he cloaths thy soul with that which he wears himself, *who cloaths himself with truth, and righteousness as a garment.* By this thou art made a Conquerour, greater than ever *Alexander* was; he overcame a world of men, but thou a world of lusts and Devils. Did one blefs God at the sight of a Toad, that God made him a man, and not a Toad? how much more thankful oughtest thou to be to God, who hath made thee that wert a hypocrite by nature, (which is far worse) an upright Christian? It is a notable saying of *Lactantius*, *Si nemo est, quin emeri malit, quam converti in aliquam Bestia figuram, quamvis hominis mentem sit habiturus, quanto miserius est in hominis figura animo esse effratro?* If (saith he) a man would choose death, rather than to have the face and shape of a Beast, though he might keep the soul of a man, how much more miserable is it under the shape of a man, to carry the heart of a beast? yet such a one is the hypocrite, yea worse; he doth not only under the shape of a man, but in the disguise of a Saint, carry a beastly filthy heart within him.

Use 4. Fourthly, Let this encourage thee who art sincere against the fears of final Apostasie. Though sincerity doth not priviledge thee from falling, yet thy Covenant-state which thou art in (if sincere) secures thee from final Apostasie. Because thy stock of grace in hand is small, thou questionest thy preserving; can these weak legs (thinkest thou) bring me to my journey's end; the few pence in my purse (little grace in my heart) bear my charges all the way to heaven, through so many expences of tryals and temptations? Truly no, if thou wert to receive no more than thou hast at present; the bread thou hast in the cupboard will not maintain thee all thy life; but (soul) thou hast a Covenant will help thee to more when that grows low; hath not God taught thee to pray for *thy daily bread*, and dost thou not find that the blessing of God in thy calling diligently followed, supplies thee from day to day? And hast thou not the same bond to sue for thy spiritual daily bread? hast thou not a Father in heaven, that knows what thou needest for thy soul as well as body? hast thou not a dear brother, yea, husband that is gone to heaven, where plenty of all grace is to be had, and that on purpose on his Childrens errand, that he might keep their souls graces and comforts alive in this necessitous world? All power is in his hands, he may go to the heap, and send what he please for thy succour, and can you starve while he hath fulness of grace by him that hath undertaken to provide for you, *Luke 10. 35.* The two pence which the *Samaritan* left, were not enough to pay for cure and board of the wounded man; therefore he

passeth his word for all that he should need besides; Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more to the sincere soul, even as much as will bring them to heaven, *Psal. 84. 11. Grace and glory he will give, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

Use 5. Fifthly, Take heed of resting on, or glorying in thy Sincerity. 'Tis true, it will enable thee to resist temptations, and recover out, when in temptation; but who enables that? where grows the root that feeds thy grace? not in thy own ground, but in heaven; it is God alone that holds thee and it in life; he that gave it, is at cost to keep it. *The Lord is thy strength, let him be thy song*; What can the Axe, though sharp, do without the Workman? Shall the Axe say, I have cut down, or the Chizel, I have carv'd? is it not the skill and art of the Workman rather? When able to resist temptation, say, *The Lord was on my side, or else I had fallen*; Set up an *Eben-Ezer*, and write on it, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped me.*

Though God promisseth in the *Psalms* even now cited, to give grace and glory to the upright; yet he will not give the glory of his grace to uprightness. *2 Sam. 22. 24.* we have *David* asserting his uprightness, and how he was preserv'd by it, *I was also upright before him, and have kept me from mine iniquity, verse 25.* he declares the fruit of his uprightness, how God bare testimony to it by rewarding him for it, in vindicating him before, and giving him victory over his enemies. *Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his eye-sight.* Now lest he should set up himself, or applaud his own uprightness to the prejudice of Gods grace, he sweetly corrects and bounds these passages, *vers. 33. God is my strength and power, and he maketh my way perfect.* As if the holy man had said, I pray mistake me not, I do not ascribe the victory over my enemies within me or without, to my self and my uprightness; no, God did all, he is my strength and power, yea, it is he that makes my way perfect; if I be sincere more than others in my way, I must thank him for it, for he makes my way perfect. He found me at first as crooked a piece, and walking in as crooked ways as any other, but he made me and my way perfect and straight. Had God pleased, he could have made *Saul* as perfect as *David*; had God left *David*, he would have been as crooked and false hearted as *Saul*.

The last branch of the point was, Sincerity hath a comforting strength in all sorts of affliction. The Applicatory improvement of which shall be only this.

Use. Let it teach us not to fear affliction, but hypocrisy. Believe it (friends) affliction is a harmfuls thing to a sincere soul; it cannot be so great as to make it inconsistent with his joy and comfort; a gracious soul in the most sharp affliction can spare his tears and pity to bestow them on the hypocrite, when in all his pomp and glory; he hath that in his bosome that gives him more comfortable apprehensions of his own affliction, than standers-by have, or can have of them; which made once a

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Sanctified affliction is a great blessing sent of God

holy man (when the pangs of death were on him) to ask a servant of his, weeping by his bed-side for him, *What she meant by her fears*, saying, *Never fear that my heavenly Father will do me any hurt*. Indeed affliction is not joyous to the flesh, which hath made some of Gods dear Children awhile to shrink, but after they have been acquainted with the work, and the comforts which God bestows on his poor Prisoners through the grate, they have learn'd another tune; like the Bird that at first putting in the Cage flutters, and shews her dislike of her restraint, but afterwards comes to sing more sweetly; than when at liberty to flye where she pleased. Be not therefore so thoughtful about affliction, but careful against hypocrisie; if the bed of affliction proves hard and uneasy to thee, it is thy self that bringst with thee what makes it so. Approve thy self to God, and trust him who hath promised to

be his Saints Bed-maker in affliction, to make it soft and easie for thee. O what a cutting word will it be in a dying hour, when thou art crying, Lord, Lord, mercy on a poor creature, to hear the Lord say, I know thee not; 'tis not the voice of a sincere Soul, but an Hypocrite that howls on his bed of sorrow: What then wilt thou do, when fallen into the hands of God, with whom thou hast but juggled in thy profession, and never sincerely didst love? If that speech was so confounding to the Patriarche, *I am Joseph whom you sold*, that they could not endure his presence, knowing their own guilt; how intolerable will it be to hear from Gods own mouth such language in a time of distress; I am God whom you have mock'd, abused and sold away for the enjoyment of your lusts, and do you now come to me? Have I any thing for you, but a Hell to torment you in to all eternity?

VERSE 14. And having on the Breast-plate of Righteousness.

THese words present us with a second piece of Armour commended to, and charged upon all Christs Souldiers, *A Breast-plate*, and the metal it is to be made of, *Righteousness*.

Concerning which, a double enquiry would be made. First, What *Righteousness* is here intended. Secondly, Why compared to this piece of the Souldiers Armour, the *Breast-plate*.

CHAP. I.

Righteousness by the Law

Contains the Explication of the words.

First, What is the *Righteousness* here meant? The Scripture speaks of a two-fold *Righteousness*, the one *Legal*, the other *Evangelical*.

First, A *Legal Righteousness*, that which God required of man in the Covenant of Works, *Rom. 10. 5. Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which doth those things shall live. Three things concur to make up this Law-righteousness.*

First, An Obedience absolutely perfect to the Law of God, that is perfect *extensivè*, in regard of the object; *intensivè*, in regard of the subject; the whole Law must be kept with the whole heart; the least defect either of part or degree in the obedience spoils all.

Secondly, This perfect Obedience to the Law of God must be personally performed by him that is thus righteous. *The man that doth these things shall live*; in that Covenant God had but mans single Bond for performance, (no Surety engaged with him) so that God having none else to come upon for the default, it was necessary (except God will lose his debt) to exact it personally on every man.

Thirdly, This perfect personal Obedience must be perpetual. This Law allows no after game; if the Law be once broken, (though but in one wry

thought) there is no place for repentance in that Covenant, though it were attended with a life afterward never so exact and spotless. After-obedience, which but due, cannot make amends for former disobedience; he doth not satisfy the Law for killing a man once, that doth so no more. How desperate were our condition, if we could not be listed in Christs muster-roll, till we were provided of such a Breast-plate as this is? *Adam* indeed had such a righteousness made to his hand, his heart and the Law were unisons; it answered it, as face answers face in a glass; it was as natural to him to be righteous as now it is to his posterity to be unrighteous. God was the Engraver of his own Image upon man, which consisted in righteousness and holiness, and he who made all so perfect, that upon a review of the whole Creation, he neither added, nor altered any thing, but saw all very good, was not less curious in the master-piece of all his work, he made man perfect. But *Adam* sinn'd, and defiled our nature; and now our nature defiles us, so that never since could *Adam's Plate* (*Righteousness*, I mean) fit the breast of any meer man: If God would save all the World for one such righteous man, (as once he offer'd to do *Sodom* for ten) he could not be found. The *Apostle* divides all the World into *Jew* and *Gentile*, *Rom. 3. 9.* he is not afraid to lay them all in

in the dirt, they are all under sin, *there is none righteous, no not one.* Not the braggiest Philosopher among the Gentiles, nor the precluest Pharisee among the Jews; we may go yet further, not the boliest Saint that ever lived can stand righteous before that Bar. Enter not into judgement with thy servant (saith David) for in thy sight shall no living man be justified, Psal. 143. 2. God hath nailed that door up; that none can for ever enter by a Law-righteousness into life and happiness. This way to heaven is like the Northern passage to the Indies, whoever attempts it, is sure to be frozen up before he gets half way thither.

Secondly, The second righteousness which the Scripture speaks of, is an *Evangelical righteousness*. Now this also is twofold; A righteousness imputed, or imparted; The imputed righteousness, is that which is wrought by Christ for the believer; the imparted, that which is wrought by Christ in the believer. The first of these, the imputed righteousness, is the righteousness of our justification, that by which the believer stands just and righteous before God, and is called by way of distinction from the latter, the righteousness of God, Rom. 3. 21. and 10. 3. Not as if the other righteousness were not of God also; But,

First, Because this is not only wrought by Christ, but also perform'd in Christ, who is God; and not inherent in us, though for us; so that the benefit of it redounds by faith to us, as if we had wrought it; hence Christ is call'd the Lord our righteousness.

Secondly, Because this is the righteousness, and not the other, which God hath ordained to be the meritorious cause of the justification of our persons, and also acceptation of our inherent righteousness imparted by him to us. Now this righteousness belongs to the fourth piece of Armour, the shield of Faith; indeed we find it bearing its name from that grace, Rom. 4. 11. where it is called the righteousness of faith, because apprehended and applied by faith unto the soul; the righteousness therefore which is here compared to the breast-plate, is the latter of the two, and that is the righteousness of our sanctification, which I call'd a righteousness imparted, or a righteousness wrought by Christ in the believer. Now this take thus described.

It is a supernatural principle of a new life, planted in the heart of every child of God by the powerful operation of the holy Spirit, whereby they endeavour to approve themselves to God and man, in performing what the Word of God requires to be performed to both. Briefly let us unfold what is rolled up in this description.

First, Here is the efficient, or workman, the holy Spirit; hence it is, the several parts of holiness are called, *fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 22. if the Spirit be not at the root, no such fruit can be seen on the branches as holiness; sensual, and not having the Spirit are inseparably coupled, Jude 19. Man by his fall hath a double loss; Gods love to him, his likeness to God. Christ restores both to his children; the first by his righteousness imputed to them, the second by his Spirit re-imparting the lost

image of God to them, which consists in righteousness and true holiness; who, but a man can impart his own nature, and beget a child like himself? and who, but the Spirit of God can make a creature like God, by making him partaker of the divine nature?

Secondly, Here is the work produced, A supernatural principle of a new life.

1. By a principle of life, I mean, an inward disposition and quality, sweetly, powerfully and constantly inclining it to that which is holy; so that the Christian (though passive in the production) is afterward active, and co-working with the Spirit in all actions of holiness, not as a life-less instrument is in the hand of a Musician, but as a living child in the hand of a father; therefore they are said to be led by the Spirit, Rom. 8.

2. 'Tis a principle of new life, the Spirits work was not to chafe and recover what was swooning, but to work a life *de novo*, in a soul quite dead; you hath he quickned who were dead in trespasses. The Devil comes as an Orator to persuade by argument, when he tempts; the Spirit as a Creator when he converts. The Devil draws forth and enkindles what he finds raked up in the heart before; But the holy Spirit puts into the soul what he finds not there, called in Scripture the seed of God, 1 Joh. 3. 9. Christ formed in you, Gal. 4. 19. the new creature, Gal. 6. 15. the Law put by God into the inner man, Jer. 31. 33. which Paul calls the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 2.

3. It is a supernatural principle by which we distinguish it from Adam's righteousness and holiness, which was connatural to him, as now sin is to us; and had he stood, would have been propagated to us, as naturally as now his sin is. Holiness was as natural to Adam's soul, as health was to his body, they both resulting *ex principiis recte constitutis*, from principles pure and right disposed.

Thirdly, Here is the soil or subject in which the Spirit plants this principle of holiness, the child of God; Because ye are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, Gal. 4. 6. not a child in all his family that is unlike his father; as is the heavenly, so are they that are heavenly, and none but children have this stamp of true holiness on them. As the Apostle, Rom. 8. 9. concludes we have not the Spirit if we be in the flesh, (that is, in an unholy sinful state) so he concludes, we are not his (children) if we have not his Spirit thus transforming and sanctifying us. There is indeed a holiness and sanctification taken in a large sense, which may be found in such as are not children, so all the children of believers are holy, 1 Cor. 7. who are not all children of God; yea, false professors also gain the name of being sanctified, Heb. 10. 29. because they pretend to be so; but that which the Scripture calls righteousness and true holiness, is a sculpture the Spirit engraves on none, but the children of God. The Spirit sanctifies none but whom Christ prays his Father to sanctify, and they are his peculiar number given of God to him, Joh. 17.

Fourthly, Here is the efficacy of this principle, planted by the Spirit in the heart of a child of God,

whereby he endeavours. As the heart, which is the principle of natural life in the body, from the infusion of a natural life, is ever beating and working; so the principle of new life in the Soul ever endeavouring. The new creature is not still-born; true holiness not a dull habit, that sleeps away the time with doing nothing. The woman cured by Christ, rose up presently, and ministred unto them, Matth. 8. No looner this principle is planted in the heart, but the man riseth up to wait on God, and act for God with all his might and main; the seed which the sanctifying Spirit cast into the Soul, is not lost in the soyl, but quickly shews it is alive by the fruit it bears.

Fifthly, Here is the imperfect nature of this principle; as it shews its reality by endeavouring, so its imperfection, that it enables but to an endeavour, not a full performance. Evangelical holiness rather makes the creature willing, than able to give full obedience. The Saints heart leaps, when his legges do but creep in the ways of Gods commandments. Mary ask'd, where they had laid Christ, meaning (it seems) to carry him away on her shoulders, which she was not able for to do; her affections were stronger than her back. That principle of holiness which is in the Saint, makes him lift at that duty which he can little more than stir. Paul, a Saint of the first magnitude, he gives us his own character, with other eminent servants of Christ, rather from the sincerity of their will and endeavour, than perfection of their work, Heb. 13. 8. *Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly*; He doth not say, *In all things we do live honestly*, as if no step were taken awry by them: No, he durst not say so for a World; but thus much he dares assert for himself and brethren, that they were willing in all things to do what was holy and righteous; where willing is not a weak listless velleity, but a will exerted in a vigorous endeavour; it weighs as much in an impartial ear, as that of the same Paul, Acts 24. 16. *Herein do I exercise myself*; He was so willing, as to use his best care and labour in the ways of holiness; and having this testimony in his own breast, he is not afraid to lay claim to a good conscience, though he doth not fully attain to that he desires; *We trust we have a good conscience, willing, &c.* He means in the favourable interpretation of the Gospel, for the Law allows no such good conscience.

Sixthly, Here is the uniformity of this principle in its actings; *To God and man*; True holiness doth not divide what God joyns together, *God spake all these words*, Exod. 20. First Table, and second also. Now a truly sanctified heart dares not skip, or blot one word God hath writ, but desires to be faithful Executor to perform the whole will of God.

Seventhly, Here is the order of its acting, as to God and man; so, first to God, and then to man; yea, to God in his righteousness, and charity to man, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *First gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God*. God is first serv'd, and man in obedience to the will of God.

Eighthly, Here is the rule it goes by, *What the*

Word of God requires. Apochryphal holiness is no true holiness, we cannot write in Religion a right line without a rule, or by a false one. And all are false rules besides the Word, *To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isa. 8. 20.

Secondly, The second thing to be enquired, is, *Why Righteousness and Holiness are compared to the Breast-plate*. And that is for a two-fold use that the Souldier makes of, and benefit he receives from this piece of Armour.

First, The Breast-plate preserves the most principal part of the body, and that is the Breast, where the very vitals of man are closely couch'd together, and where a shot and stab is more deadly than in other parts that are remote from the fountain of life. A man may out-live many wounds received in the arms or leggs, but a stab in the heart, or other vital parts, is the certain messenger of death approaching. Thus righteousness and holiness preserve the principal part of a Christian, his Soul and Conscience; We live or dye spiritually, yea, eternally, as we look to our Souls and Consciences. 'Tis not a wound in Estate, Credit, or any other worldly enjoyment, that kills us in this sense. These touch not, hazard not the Christians life any more, than the shaving of the beard, or paring of the nails do the mans; spiritual vitals are seated in the Soul and Conscience; it must be a spiritual Dagger that stabs these, and that only is sin, which is said to *harm the precious life*, Prov. 6. 26. This is the dart that strikes the young man through the liver, who halts to his lust, as the Bird to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life, Prov. 7. Now righteousness and holiness defend the Conscience from all wounds and harms, from sin, which is the weapon Satan useth to give the conscience its deadly stab with.

Secondly, The Breast-plate, by defending the principal part, emboldens the Souldier, and makes him fearless of danger, and that is as necessary in fight as the other; it is almost all one for an Army to be killed or cowed; A dead Souldier slain upon the place, will do in a manner as much good, as a dead-hearted Souldier that is dismayed with fear; his heart is killed while he is alive; And a naked breast exposeth the unarmed Souldier to a trembling heart, whereas one otherwise cowardly, having his breast defended with a plate of proof, will the more boldly venture upon the Pikes. Thus righteousness by defending the conscience, fills the creature with courage in the face of death and danger, whereas guilt (which is the nakedness of the Soul) puts the stoutest sinner into a shaking fit of fear. *The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a Lion*, Prov. 28. 1. They say Sheep are scared with the clatter of their own feet as they run, so is the sinner with the din of his guilt. No sooner Adam saw his plate off, and himself to be naked, but he is afraid at Gods voice, as if he had never been acquainted with him. Never can we recover truly our courage, till we recover our holiness: *If our heart condemn us not, then have we boldness with God*, 1 John 3. 21.

CHAP. II.

*A short point from the connexion of this piece of Armour with the first;
Righteousness with Truth.*

THE words thus opened, the Observations are now ealie to be drawn from them; but the copulative, *And*, with which this piece of Armour is so closely buckled to the former, bids us make a little stand to take notice, how lovingly truth and holiness are here conjoyn'd like the sister-curtains of the Tabernacle (so called in the *Hebrew* Exod. 26. 3.) and 'tis pity any should unclasp them, which God hath so fitted each to other. Let that then be the note from hence.

Note, That Truth and Holiness must go together.

First, Take Truth for *truth of doctrine*. An orthodox judgement, with an unholy heart, and ungodly life, is as uncomely as a mans head would be on a beasts shoulders. That man hath little cause to brag, that what he holds is truth, if what he doth be wicked; poor wretch, if thou beest a slave to the Devil, it matters not to what part thy chain is fastened, whether head or foot; he holds thee as sure to him by thy foot in thy practice, as he would by thy head, if heretical and blasphemous; yea, thou art worse on it in some respects, than they who are like themselves all over. Thy wickedness is greater, because committed in the face of truth; many, the mistakes of their erroneous judgements, betray them unto the unholiness of their practice; their wicked lives are the conclusion which follows necessarily upon the premises of their errors; but thy judgement lights thee another way (except thou meanest further to accumulate the sin by fathering thy unholiness on truth it self.) They only miss their way to heaven in the dark, or are misled by a false light of an erroneous judgement, which possibly rectified, would bring them back into the path of holiness; but thou sinnest by the broad light of truth, and goest on boldly to hell in noon-day; like the Devil himself, who knows truth from error well enough, but hates to be ruled by it. Should a Minstrel sing to a sweet tune with her voice, and play to another with her hand that is harsh and displeasing; such musick would more grate the judicious ear, than if she had sung to what she plaid. Thus to sing to truth with our judgement, and play wickedness with our heart and hand in our life, is more abhorring to God and all good men, than where the judgement is erroneous, as well as the life ungodly. *Nabush* had not

enraged *David* so much, if he had come with an Army of twenty thousand men into the field against him, as he did by abusing his Embassadors so basely. The open hostility which many express by their ungodly lives, does not so much provoke God, as the base usage they give to his truth, which he sends to treat with them; yea, in them. This kindles the fire of his wrath into a flame to purpose, when he sees men put scorn upon his truth, by walking contrary to the light of it, and imprisoning it from having any command over them in their lives, and yet own it to be the truth of God.

Secondly, Take it for *truth of heart*, and so truth and holiness must go together. In vain do men pretend to Sincerity, if they be unholy in their lives. God owns no unholy Sincerity. The terms do clash one with another; Sincerity teacheth the soul to point at the right end of all its actions, the glory of God; now it is not enough to set the right end before us, but to walk in the right way to it; we shall never come at Gods glory out of Gods way; holiness and righteousness is the sincere mans path set by God, as a Causey on which he is to walk, both to the glorifying of God, and the being glorified by God. Now he that thinks to find a shorter cut, and a nearer way to obtain this end, than this way, he takes but pains to undo himself. As he finds a new way of glorifying God, which God hath not chalkt, so he must find a new heaven which God hath not prepared, or else he must go without one to reward him for his pains. O friends! look to find this stamp of righteousness and holiness on your Sincerity. The *Proverb* saith, Hell is full of good wishes, of such, who now, (when 'tis too late) wish they had acted their part otherwise when on earth, than they did. And do you not think there are there more than a good store of good meanings also? such who pretended, when on earth, they meant well, and their hearts were honest, however it hapt that their lives were otherwise; what a strange delusion is this? if one should say, though all the water the bucket brings up, be naught and stinking, yet that which is in the Well is all sweet, who would believe him? Thy heart upright, and thy meanings good, when all that proceeds from thy heart in thy life is wicked, how can it be? who will believe thee? surely thou dost not thy self.

C H A P. III.

wherein the grand Point from the words is laid down, That the Christians especial care should be to keep on his Breast-plate, i. e. maintain the power of holiness in his conversation; with the first Reason of the Point taken from God, his design as to this.

IT is now time, having measured the ground, to lay the bottom stone, on which the structure from these words is to be rear'd. I thought to have drawn out several points as distinct foundations to build our discourse upon; but shall now rather choose to unite all in a single point, (as one main building) though I make a few more rooms therein, to entertain, what else should have been handled severally. The Point is this,

Doctr. That he, who means to be a Christian indeed, must endeavour to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in his life and conversation. This is to have the Breast-plate of righteousness, and to have it on also; he is a holy righteous man that hath a work of grace and holiness in his heart; as he a living man that hath a principle of life in him: but he maintains the power of holiness that exerts this vigorously in his daily walking, as he the power of natural life, in whom the principle of life seated in the heart, impowers every member to do its particular office in the body strenuously. Thus walk'd the primitive Christians (in whose veins, saith *Jerome*, the blood of Christ was yet warm) their great care was to keep on this Breast-plate of righteousness close and entire, that it neither might loosen by negligence, nor be broken by presumptuous sinning; the character then a Saint was known by from other men, was his holy walking, *Luke 1. 6.* There 'tis said of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, They were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless. This was also holy *Paul's* every days exercise, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man, *Acts 24.* Never did any more curiously watch the health of their Body, than he attended to the health of his Soul, that no unholiness or unrighteousness (which is the only bane of it) might dis Temper and defile it. And truly, we who come after such holy ones in the same profession, do bind our selves to our good behaviour, that we will walk holily and righteously, as they did. The Point carries its evidence on its fore-head, and needs rather pressing than proving; and therefore I may be pardoned, if the Demonstrations of the Point be handled as well as Motives to, as Reasons for the Duty, which will spare work in the Application. Reasons of the Point shall be taken from several heads.

First, In regard of God, whose great design is to have his people a holy people. This is enough to oblige, yea, to provoke every Christian to promote what God hath so strongly set upon his heart to effect. He deserves to be cashier'd, that endeavours not to pursue what his General declares to be his design. And he to have his name blotted out of Christ's muster roll, whose heart stands not on tip-

toes ready to march, yea, to run on his design. It is an honourable Epitaph which *Paul* sets on the memory of *David* long before deceased, *Acts 13. 36.* that he in his own generation serv'd the will of God; he made it the business of his life to carry on Gods designs. And all gracious hearts, touch'd with the same loadstone of Gods love, stand to the same point. All the private ends of a sincere Soul are swallowed up in this, that he may do the will of God in his generation. This he heartily prays for, *Thy will be done*; this is his study, to find what is the good and acceptable will of God; which is the very cause why he loves the Bible above all other books of the world beside, because in none but that can he find what is the mind and will of God concerning him. Now I shall endeavour to shew, that this is the great design of God, to have his people holy. It runs like a silver thread through all Gods other designs.

S E C T. I.

First, It appears in his very Decrees, which (so far as they are printed and expos'd to our view in the Scripture) we may safely look into. What was God driving at in his electing some out of the lump of mankind? Was it only their impunity he desired, that while others were left to swim in torment and misery, they should only be exempted from that infelicity? No sure; the Apostle will tell us more, *Ephes. 1. 4.* He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the World, that we should be holy. Mark, not because he foresaw that they would be of themselves holy, but that they should be holy; this was that God resolved he would make them to be. As if some curious Workman, seeing a Forest growing upon his own ground of trees (all alike, not one better than another) should mark some above all the rest, and set them apart in his thoughts, as resolving to make some rare pieces of workmanship of them. Thus God chose some out of the lump of mankind, whom he set apart for this purpose, to carve his own Image upon them, which consists in righteousness and true holiness; a piece of such rare workmanship, which when God hath finish'd, and shall shew it to Men and Angels, will appear to exceed the Fabrick of Heaven and Earth it self.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, It was his design in sending his Son into the world. It could be no small occasion that brought him hither. God wants not servants to go on his ordinary errands. The glorious Angels, who behold his face continually, are ready to flie where-

ever he sends them. But here God had a work to do of such importance, that he would put trust not in his servants, but his Son alone to accomplish. Now what Gods design was in this great work, will appear by knowing what Christ was, for they were (both Father and Son) agreed, what should be done before he came upon the Stage of action. See therefore the very bottom of Christs heart in this his great undertaking open'd, *Titus. 2. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*: Had man kept his primitive righteousness, Christs pain and pains had been spared. It was mans lost holiness he came to recover. It had not been an enterprize becoming the greatness and holiness of such a one as the Son of God to engage for, less than this. Both God and man, between whom Christ comes to negotiate, call for holiness. Gods glory, mans happiness; neither of which can be attain'd, except holiness be restored to man. Not Gods glory, who as he is glorious in the holiness of his own nature and works, so is he glorified by the holiness of his peoples hearts and lives; were it possible (which is the height of all blasphemy but to think) that the holiness of God could be separated from any of his attributes or works; God himself would cease to be glorious; his sovereignty would degenerate into tyranny, his wisdom into craft, his justice into cruelty, &c. Now the glory of all Gods attributes and works, resulting from his holiness in them all, it follows that then we glorify God, when we give him the glory of his holiness, and who but a holy creature, will or can do that? while man stands under the power of sin, how can he give God the glory of that, which his own sinful nature makes him despise, and hate God for? Had Christs design therefore been to procure man a pardon, and not restore his lost holiness, he had been but a *Minister of sins*, and instead of bringing glory to God, he had set sin in the Throne, and only obtain'd a liberty for the creature to dishonour God without controul. Again, mans happiness could not have been obtain'd without a recovery of his lost holiness. Mans happiness stands in his likeness to God, and fruition of God; he must have the first before he can enjoy the latter; he must be like God, before God can take any liking in him; and God must take full content in man, before he admits him to the enjoyment of himself, which that he may do, Christ undertakes to make his people holy, as God is holy. You see now what was the great design that the heart of Christ was so full with, to make us a holy people. Well therefore may the Apostle bring in that heavy charge against all unholy professors, which he doth with tears, *Phil. 3. 18. That they are enemies of the cross of Christ*. Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil; The loose unholy walker, he goes about to destroy the work of Christ. The Lord Jesus lays down his heart-blood to redeem souls out of the hand of sin and Satan, that they may be free to serve God without fear in holiness; and the loose Christian, (if I may call him so) denies the Lord that bought him, and delivers

up himself basely unto his old bondage, from which Christ had ransom'd him with so great a sum; whose heart doth not tremble at such horrid ingratitude?

SECT. III.

Thirdly, It is Gods great design in the regenerating work of the Spirit on the hearts of his people, to make them righteous, and fit them to walk holily before him, *Ezek. 36. 26, 27. where God promisseth a new heart, and to put his Spirit into them, and why will he do this? that he may cause them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgements, and do them*. An old heart would have served well enough to have done the Devils drudgery withal. But God intending them for more high and noble employment, to lift up their head out of sins prison, and prefer them to his own service, therefore he throws away their gaol-cloaths, and beautifies them with the graces of his Spirit, that their hearts may suit their work. When God ordered the Temple to be built with such curious care and costly materials, he declared that he intended it for holy use: That was not so glorious as the spiritual Temple of a regenerate heart is, which is *the workmanship of God himself*, *Eph. 2. 10.* and for what intent rear'd by him, if we read on, we may see, *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them*. This accents the unrighteousness and unholiness of a Saint with a circumflex, it lays a deeper aggravation I mean upon his sin, than others, because committed against such a work of the Spirit as none have in the world besides. A sin acted in the Temple was greater than if the same had been by a Jew committed in his private dwelling, because the Temple was a consecrated place. The Saint is a consecrated person, and by acts of unrighteousness he profanes Gods Temple; the sin of another is theft, because he robs God of the glory due to him; but the sin of a Saint is sacrilege, because he robs God of that which is devoted to him in an especial manner. Better not to repent at all, than to repent of our repentance; not to vow and dedicate our selves to him, and after this to enquire how we may evade and repeal this act; such a one tells the world he finds *some iniquity in God*, that alters his opinion and practice formerly taken up by him. In a word, the Saint is not only by the Spirit consecrated to God, but by the Spirit indued with a new life from God; *you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*, *Eph. 2. 4.* A noble principle of high extraction, given you on a high design, that you should live up to that principle in righteousness and holiness; when God breath'd a rational soul into man, he intended not that he should live with the beasts, and as the beasts; nor that thou shouldst have thy conversation as a meer carnal man doth, but that *as thou hast received Christ, so thou shouldest walk in him*, *Col. 2. 6.* The Apostle blames the *Corinthians* for living below themselves, and like the poor-spirited men of the world in their corrupt passions: *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* *1 Cor. 3. 3.* when thou Christian

Christian aſteſt unholily, thou ſinneſt at a high rate indeed; others ſin againſt the light of God in their conſciences, there is the furtheſt they can go; but thou ſinn'ſt againſt the life of God in thy very heart. The more unnatural any act is, the more horrid. 'Tis unnatural for a man to be cruel to his own fleſh; for a woman to go about to kill the child in her womb, O how your ears tingle at ſuch a flagitious act! what then art thou going to do, when by thy unholy walking thou art killing the babe of grace in thy ſoul? Is not *Herod* mark'd for a bloody man that would have butcher'd Chriſt newly born in the world? and canſt thou without horreur attempt the murdering of Chriſt newly form'd in thy heart.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, It is the great deſign God drives at in his Word and Ordinances, to make his people holy and righteous. The Word of God, 'tis both ſeed to beget, and food to nourish holineſs begotten in the heart; every part of it contributes to this deſign abundantly. The *preceptive part* affords a perfect rule of holineſs for the Saint to walk by, not accommodated to the humours of any, as mens laws are, who make their laws as Taylors their garments, to fit the crooked bodies they are for, ſo they the crooked minds of men. The commands of God gratifie the luſts of none; they are ſuited to the holy nature of God, not the unholy hearts of men. The *promiſes* preſent us with admirable encouragements to toll and allure us on in the way of holineſs; all of them ſo warily laid, that an unholy heart cannot without violence to his conſcience, lay claim to any one of them, (God having ſet that flaming ſword, conſcience, in the ſinners boſome, to keep him off from touching or taſting the fruit of this tree of life) and if any prophane heart be ſo bold, while he is walking in the ways of unrighteouſneſs, to finger any of the treaſure that is lockt up in the promiſes, it doth not long ſtay in their hands, but God ſooner or later, makes them throw it away as *Judas* his *thirty pieces*, their conſciences telling them they are not the right owners; falſe comforts from the promiſes, like riches (which *Solomon* ſpeaks of) *make themſelves wings and flie away* from the unholy wretch, when he thinks he is moſt ſure of them. Again, the *threatnings*, the minatory part of the Word, this runs like a devouring gulph on either ſide of the narrow path of holineſs and righteouſneſs, ready to ſwallow up every ſoul that walks not therein, *Rom. 1. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* To the promiſſory and minatory is annexed the exemplary part of the Word; as book-caſes to confirm our faith concerning the truth and certainty of both. The promiſes they are back'd with the examples of holy men and women, who have beaten the path of holineſs for us, and through faith and patience in their holy courſe, have at laſt obtain'd the comfort of the promiſes in heavens bliſs, to the unſpeakable encouragement of all that are aſcending

the hill after them. To the threatnings are annex many ſad examples of unholy ſouls, who have undone themſelves, and damned their own ſouls in unholy ways, whoſe carcaſſes are as it were thrown upon the ſhore of the Word, and expoſed to our view in reading and hearing of it, that we may be kept from being ingulft in thoſe ſins that were their perdition, *1 Cor. 10. 6. Theſe were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things as they alſo luſted.* Thus we ſee how the whole compoſure of the Scripture befriends holineſs, and ſpeaks what the deſign of God therein is, which yet to carry on the more ſtrongly, God hath appointed many holy Ordinances to quicken the Word upon our hearts. Indeed all of them are but the Word in ſeveral forms. Hearing, Prayer, Sacraments, Meditation, holy Conference; the Word is the ſubject matter of them all; only as a wife *Phyſician* doth prepare the ſame drug ſeveral ways, ſometimes to be taken one way, ſometime another, to make it more effectual, and reſreſh his Patient with variety; ſo the Lord conſulting our weakneſs, doth by his Word adminiſtring it to us now in this, and anon in that Ordinance for our greater delight and profit, aiming ſtill at the ſame end in all, even the promoting of holineſs in the hearts and lives of his people; what are they all but as veins and arteries, by which Chriſt conveys the life-blood and ſpirits of holineſs into every member of his myſtical body? The Church is the garden, Chriſt the fountain, every Ordinance as a pipe from him, to water all the beds in this garden, and why, but to make them more abundant in the fruits of righteouſneſs?

SECT. V.

Fifthly, 'Tis his deſign in all his providences. *All things* (that is, all providences eſpecially) *work together for good to them that love God, Rom. 8. 28.* and how do they work for their good, but by making them more good and more holy? providences are good and evil to us as they find, or make us better or worſe; nothing is good to him that is evil. As God makes uſe of all the ſeaſons of the year for the harveſt, the froſt and cold of Winter as well as the heat of the Summer; ſo doth he of fair and foul, pleaſing and unpleaſing providences for promoting holineſs; Winter-providences kill the weeds of luſts, and Summer-providences ripen and mellow the fruits of righteouſneſs; when he afflicts, 'tis for our profit to make us partakers of his holineſs, *Heb. 12. 10. Afflictions Bernard* compares to the *Texel*, which though it be ſharp and ſcratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. God would not rub ſo hard if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures. God loves purity ſo well, he had rather ſee a hole than a ſpot in his child's garments; when he deals more gently in his providences, and lets his people ſit under the ſunny bank of comforts and enjoyments, fencing them from the cold blaſts of affliction, 'tis to draw forth the ſap of grace, and haſten their growth in holineſs. *Paul* underſtood this, when he beſought the Saints at *Rome*, *by the mercies of God to preſent their bodies a living*

living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, Rom. 12. 1. Implying, that mercies came from God to us on this very errand; God might reasonably expect such a return. The Husbandman, when he lays his compost on his ground, looks to receive it at harvest again in the fuller crop; and so doth God by his mercies; therefore he doth so vehemently complain of *Israels* ingratitude, *Hosea* 2. 8. *She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oyl, and multiplied her silver, which they prepared for Baal.* God took it ill, and well might he, that they should entertain *Baal* at his cost; if God sends in any

cheer to us, he would have us know that it is for his own entertainment; he means to come and sup upon his own charge. And what dish is it that pleaseth Gods palate? Surely, he that would not have his people eat of any unclean thing, will not himself. They are the pleasant fruits of holiness and righteousness, which Christ comes into his garden to feed on, *Cant.* 5. 1. *I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrh and my spice, I have eaten my honey with my honey-comb, I have drunk my wine with my milk,*

CHAP. IV.

The second Reason why the Christian should wear this Breast-plate of Righteousness, and maintain the power of holiness so carefully, taken from Satans great design against it.

SEcondly, In regard of Satan, whose design is as much against the Saints holiness, as God is for it. He hath ever a Nay to Gods Yea; if God be for holiness, he must needs be against it; and what should be our chief care to defend, but that which Satans thoughts and plots are most laid to assault and storm? There is no creature the Devil delights so to lodge and dwell in, as man; when he enters into other creatures, it is but on design against man; as when he entered the *Serpent*, it was to deceive *Eve*: The *Swine*, *Matth.* 8. 32. he possess'd them on a design to dispossess the *Gergesenes* of the Gospel; but might he choose his own lodging, none pleaseth him but man; and why? Because man only is capable by his rational Soul of sin and unrighteousness. And as he prefers man to quarter in above all inferior creatures; so he had rather possess the Souls of men than their Bodies; none but the best room in the house will serve this unclean Spirit to vomit his blasphemies, and spit out his malice in against God; and why? but because the Soul is the proper seat of holiness and sin. This one gives us the reason why amongst all the ways that Satan plagued *Job*, he did not choose to make a forcible entry into his body, and possess him corporally; for certainly he might, that being short of taking away his life (the only thing reserv'd by God out of his commission) and being in his power, sure it was not to spare *Job* that trouble; no pity dwells in a Devils heart; but the very reason seems to be what an Ancient hath noted; The Devil waited for higher preferment, he hoped to possess his Soul, which he longed for a thousand times more; he had rather hear *Job* himself blaspheme God, while he was *compos mentis*, his own man, than himself in *Job* to belch out blasphemies against God, which would have been the Devils own sin, and not *Jobs*. Thus you see, 'tis holiness and righteousness his spite is at; no gain comes to the Devils purse, no victory he counts got, except he can make the Christian lose his holiness. He can allow a man to have any thing, or be any thing, rather than be truly, powerfully holy. It is not your riches, and worldly enjoyments, he grutches so much as your holiness. *Job*, for ought we know,

might have enjoyed his flocks and herds, his children and servants, without any disturbance from Hell, if the Devil had not seen him to be a godly man, *one fearing God, and eschewing evil.* This anger'd the wicked Spirit; now he tries a fall with *Job*, that if possible, he may un-Saint him, and despoil him of his Breast-plate of righteousness. His plundering of his estate, butchering his children, car-bonadoing (as I may say) his body with sores and boils, (which were as so many deep flashes in his flesh) was but like some thieves cruel usage of men whom they would rob, on a design to make them confess and deliver up their treasure; would but *Job* have thrown the Devil his purse, his integrity, I mean, and let Satan carry away his good conscience, Satan would soon have unbound him, and not have cared if he had his estate and children again. The Wolf tears the fleece, that he may come to raven on the flesh, and suck the blood of the sheep; The life-blood of holiness is that which this hellish Murderer longs to suck out of the Christians heart. It is not a form of godliness, or goodly shews of righteousness, the Devil maligns, but the power; not the name, but the new nature it self, brings this Lion fell out of his Den. Satan can live very peaceably, as a quiet Neighbour, by the door of such as will content themselves with an empty name of profession; this alters not his property, nor toucheth his copy-hold. *Judas* his profession (he knew) did not put him a step out of his way to Hell; the Devil can shew a man a way to damnation through Duties and Ordinances of Gods worship. That covetous, trayterous heart which *Judas* carried with him to hear Christs Sermon, and preach his own, held him fast enough to the Devil; and therefore he gives him line enough, liberty enough to keep his credit a while with his fellow Apostles; he cares not though others think him a Disciple of Christ, so he know him to be his own slave.

In a word. It is not a superstitious holiness which offends him; how can it? when he is the Institutor of it himself, and that on a subtil design to undermine the true genuine holiness in the hearts of men; and by this time the Church of Christ hath found how

deep a contrivance it is. This in all ages hath been to the power of holiness, what the Ivy is to the Oak; the wanton embraces of this mock-holiness about Religion, hath killed the heart of Scriptural-holiness where-ever it hath prevailed; 'tis to the true holiness as the Concubine is to the true Wife, who is sure to draw the Husbands love from her. This brat the Devil hath long put out to nurse to the *Romish Church*, which hath taken a great deal of pains to bring it up for him; and no wonder when she is so well paid for its maintenance; it having brought her in so much worldly treasure and riches. No, 'tis holiness in its naked simplicity, as it is founded upon Scripture-bottom, and guided by Scripture-rule, that he is a sworn enemy against. Indeed this is the flag which the soul hangs out, and by which it gives defiance to the Devil, no wonder if he strives to shoot it down. Now, and not till now the creature really declares himself a friend to God, and an enemy to the Kingdom of darkness: and here is the ground of that quarrel, which will never cease so long as he continues an unclean spirit, and they to be the holy ones of God. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12.* Mark first, what it is, that makes the Devil and his instruments take arms, and breathe slaughter against Christians, 'Tis their godliness; many specious pretences persecutors have to disguise their malice; but the Spirit of Gods that looks through all their hypocritical mufflers, is privy to the Cabinet-counsels of their hearts, and those instructions which they have from the Devil, that worketh so mightily in them, he tells us, *he that will live godly, shall be persecuted; down-right godliness is the*

Butt they level their arrows at. Again, observe the kind of godliness at which their blood rises, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus.* There are more sorts of holiness and godliness in the world than one; But all may have fair quarter at the Devils hands, except this godliness in Christ Jesus. The Devil hath an implacable malice against Christ; he hates, as I may so say, every letter of his name; that godliness which is learn'd of him, and derived from him, he opposeth to death. Christian blood is sweet to his tooth, but the blood of the Christians godliness is far sweeter. He had rather (if he could) kill that than them, rather draw the Christian from his godliness, than butcher him for it; yet that he may not stand out, he'll play at small game, and express his cruelty upon their bodies, but it is when he cannot come at their souls, *Heb. 11. 37. They were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain.* That which these bloody men principally desired, was to draw them into sin, and make Apostates of them; and therefore they tempted them before they slew them. The Devil accounts that the compleat victory, when he can despoil them of their Armour, and bribe them from their steadfastness in their holy profession. *Let her be defiled, and let her eye look up to Zion, Micah 4. 7.* he had rather see Saints defiled with unrighteousness and sin, than defiled with their blood and gore. Persecution (he hath learnt) doth but mow the Church, which afterward comes up the thicker for it, 'tis unholiness that ruins it. Persecutors do but plough Gods field for him, while he is sowing it with the blood that they let out; but prophaneness that roots it up, and lays all waste, Consciences and Churches also.

CHAP. V.

The third Reason taken from the Excellency of Righteousness and Holiness.

THirdly, In regard of holiness it self; the incomparable excellency whereof commands us to pursue it, and endeavour it with our utmost care and strength.

First, It is an excellency peculiar to the rational creature. Inferiour creatures have a goodness proper to them, but intellectual beings are only capable of an inward holiness. God saw every creature he made to be good; only Angels and Man to be holy; and if we part with holiness that is our Crown, we become worse than the beasts themselves; yea, it is holiness and righteousness that makes one man differ from another in Gods account. We go by a false heart, when we value men by their external advantages. All stand on a level as to God, till holiness be super-added. Princes, in whom is seated the Sovereign power, claim as their prerogative, to set the just value on all coyn, what every piece shall go for; this a penny, and that a pound; much more surely doth it belong to God to rate his creatures; and he tells us, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. 12. The tongue*

of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth, Prov. 10. 20. The Spirit of God compares the righteous to silver and gold, the preciouslest of metals, which above all other metals are of such account, that only money made of silver and gold is currant in all Countreys; Holiness will go in both worlds; but external excellencies, such as worldly riches, honours, &c. like leather and brass money, are of no esteem, but in this beggerly lower world.

Secondly, It is holiness that is, though not our plea, yet our evidence for heaven; *without holiness none shall see God.* Heaven is a City where righteousness dwells: Though God suffers the earth to bear for a while unholy men, (which it doth not without sweating under their weight, and groaning to be rid of this load,) yet sure he will never pester heaven with such a crew. Before Enoch was translated to heaven, he walk'd holily with God on earth, which made God desire his company so soon. O friends! do we like an empty profession, such a Religion as will leave us short of heaven? or can we

were reasonably expect a dispensation above others, that we should commence glorified creatures in Heaven, without keeping our acts; and performing the exercises of godliness, which God hath laid upon those that will stand *Candidates* for that place? Certainly what God hath writ in his Word, as to this, shall stand. He will not make a blot in his decrees for any: which he should, did he alter the method of salvation in the least. Either we must therefore renounce our hopes of coming thither, or resolve to walk in the path of holiness that will lead us thither. That is vain breath which sets not the sayles of our affections a going, and our feet a travelling thither, where we would be at last.

Thirdly, It is Holiness, and that maintain'd in its power, that capacitates us for communion with God in this life. Communion with God is so desirable, that many pretend to it, that know not what it means: Like some that brag of their acquaintance with such a great man, who may be never saw his face, or were admitted into his company; the Spirit of God gives the lye to that man, who saith he hath any acquaintance with God, while he keeps his acquaintance with any unrighteousness, 1 *John* 1. 6. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lye.* The Apostle is willing to pass for a loud liar himself, if he walks in darkness, and pretends to have fellowship with God. How can they walk together that are not agreed? Communion is founded on union, and union upon likenesses. And how like are God and the Devil, holiness and unrighteousness, one to the other? There is a vast difference between conversing with Ordinances, and having communion with God. A man may have great acquaintance with Ordinances, and be a great stranger to God at the same time; Every one that goes to Court, and hangs about the Palace, doth not speak with the Prince; And what sorry things are Ordinances without this communion with God? Ordinances are as it were the Exchange, where holy Souls trade with God by his Spirit for heavenly treasures, from which they come filled and enriched with grace and comfort. Now what does the unholy wretch? Truly like some idle persons that come and walk among Merchants on the Exchange, but have no business there, or commerce whereby they get any advantage. An unholy heart hath no dealings with God, he takes no notice of God, may be, to be sure God takes no such notice of him, as to communicate himself graciously to him. Nay, suppose a person habitually holy, but under the power of some temptation for the present, whereby he debases himself, he is in this case unfit to have any friendly communion with God. *A righteous man falling down before the wicked is,* (saith Solomon) *as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring,* Prov. 25. 26. Much more is he so when he falls down before the wicked One, and yields to his temptation, now his spirit is royl and muddied; and if we will not use the water of a Spring, (though in it self pure and wholesome) when it is troubled, or drink of that Vessel that runs thick, but stay while it be settled and comes clear; can we wonder if God refuse to taste of those duties which a godly person

performs, before the stream be cleared, by the renewing of his repentance for his sin?

Fourthly, Holiness, in the power of it, is necessary to the true peace and repose of the Soul. I do not say our peace is bottom'd on the righteousness of our nature, or holiness of our lives, yet it is ever attended with these, *No peace to the wicked, saith my God.* We may as soon make the Sea alwayes still, as an unholy heart truly quiet; From whence come the intestine wars in mens bosoms, that set them at variance with themselves, but from their own lusts? These break the peace, and keep the man in a continual tempest. As the Spirit of holiness comes into the heart, and the Scepter of Christ (which is a Scepter of righteousness) bears sway in the life; so the storm abates more and more, till it be quite down, which will not be while we are short of Heaven; There only is perfect rest, because perfect holiness: Whence those frights and fears which make them a *Major Missabib*, *Terrour round about*, they wake and sleep with the scent of Hell-fire about them continually; O 'tis their unholy course, and unrighteous wayes, that walk in their thoughts, as *Johns* ghost in *Herods*. This makes men discontented in every condition; they neither can relish the sweetness of their enjoyments, nor bear the bitter taste of their afflictions. I know there are wayes to stupifie the conscience, and bind up for a time the senses of an unholy heart, that it shall not feel its own misery; but the vertue of this *Opium* is soon spent, and then the wretch is upon the rack again, and his horror returns upon him with a greater paroxysm; an example whereof I have heard. A notorious Drunkard, who used (when told of his ungodly life) to shake off all the threatnings of the Word, that his friends would have fastened on his conscience, as easily as *Paul* did the Viper from his hand, bearing himself upon a presumptuous hope of the mercy of God in Christ: It pleased God to lay him some while after on his back by sickness, which for a time scared his old Companions (Brethren with him in iniquity) from visiting him; but hearing he was cheary and pleasant in his sickness, ventured to see him, whom they found very confident of the mercy of God, whereby their hands were much strengthened in their old wayes; but before he dyed, this tune was changed to purpose, his vain hopes vanish, his guilty conscience awakened, and the poor wretch roasted in the scorching flames of his former ungodly practices, now ready to dye, cries out despairingly, *O Sirs, I had prepared a Plaister, and thought all was well, but now it will stick no longer;* His guilty conscience rubb'd it off, as fast as he clapt it on. And truly (friends) you will find the blood of Christ himself will not cleave to a Soul that is in league with any way of sin and unrighteousness; God will pluck such from the horns of this Altar, that fly to it, but not from their unrighteousness, and slay them in sight of this Sanctuary they boldly trust to. You know the message Solomon sent to *Adonijah*, *If thou shewest thy self a worthy man, not a hair of thy head shall fall; but if wickedness shall be found in thee, thou shalt surely dye.* In vain do men think to shroud themselves under Christs wing, from the hue and cry

of their accusing conscience, while wickedness finds a Sanctuary in them. Christ never was intended by God to secure men in their unrighteousness, but to save them from it.

Fifthly, Holiness has a mighty influence upon others, when this appears with power in the lives of Christians, it works mightily upon the spirits of men; this stops the mouths of the ungodly, who are ready to reproach Religion, and throw the dirt of professors sins on the face of profession itself. They say Frogs will cease croaking, when a light is brought near unto them. The light of a holy conversation hangs as it were a padlock on profane lips; yea, it forceth them to acknowledge God in them. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works; and glorify your Father which is in heaven*, Matth. 5. 16. yea more, this would not only stop their mouths, but be a means to open their very hearts to the embracing of Christ, and his grace; one reason why such shoals of souls came into the net of the Gospel in primitive times, was, because then the Divinity of the Gospel-doctrine appear'd in the divinity and holiness of Christians lives. *Justin Martyr* when converted, professed, *That the holiness which shined in Christians lives and patience, that triumphed over their enemies cruelty at their deaths, made him conclude the doctrine of the Gospel was truth.* Yea, *Julian* himself, as vile a wretch as he was, could say, that the Christian Religion came to be propagated so much, *Propter Christianorum erga omnes beneficia, Because Christians were a people that did good to all, and hurt to none.* I am sure we find by woful experience that in these debauch'd times, wherein Religion is so bespattered with frequent scandals, yea, a common looseness of professors, 'tis hard to get any that are out, to come under the net of the Gospel. Some beasts there are, that if they have once blown upon a pasture, others will hardly eat of that grass for some while after. Truly I have had some such sad thoughts as these concerning our unhappy times, that till the ill savour which the pride, contentions, errors, and looseness of professors now a-days, have left upon the truths and Ordinances of Christ, be worn off, there is little hopes of any great comings-in of new converts. The Minister cannot be always preaching; two or three hours may be in a week he spends among his people in the Pulpit, holding the glass of the Gospel before their faces; but the lives of professors, these preach all the week long; if they were but holy and exemplary, they would be as a repetition of the Preachers Sermon to their families and neighbours among whom they converse, and keep the sound of his doctrine continually ringing in their ears; This would give Christians an admirable advantage in doing good to their carnal neighbours by counsel and reproof, which now is seldom done, and when done, it proves to little purpose, because not back'd with their own exemplary walking. *It becometh him (saith Tertullian) that would counsel or reprove another, to guard his speech, Autocrine propriae conversationis, ne dicta factis deficientibus erubescant; with the authority of his own conversation,*

left warning that, what he says, puts himself to the blush. We do not love one that hath a stinking breath should come very near us; and truly we count one comes very near us that reproves us; such therefore had need have a sweet-scented life. Reproofs are good physick, but they have an unpleasant farewel, 'tis hard for men not to vomit them up on the face of him that gives them; now nothing is more powerful to keep a reproof from thus coming up, than the holiness of the person that reproves, *Let the righteous smite me, (saith David) it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oyl which shall not break my head*, Psal. 141. 5. See how well it is taken from such a hand, from the authority that holiness carries with it. None but a vile wretch will smite a righteous man with reproach, for smiting him with a reproof, if softly laid on, and like oyl fomented, and wrought into him, (as it should) with compassion and love to his soul. Thus we see how influential the power of holiness would be into the wicked; neither would it be less upon our brethren and fellow-Christians. When one Christian sees holiness sparkle in the life of another he converses with, he shall find his own grace spring within him, as the babe in *Elizabeth* at the salutation of *Mary*. Truly one eminently holy is enough to put life into a whole society; on the contrary, the error or looseness of one professor, endangers the whole company that are acquainted with him. Therefore we have so strict a charge, *Heb. 12. Follow peace and holiness, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* It is spoken to professors: The Heathens drunkenness, uncleanness, unrighteous walking, did not so much endanger them; but when a root of bitterness springs up among professors themselves, this hazards the defiling of many. A scab on the wolfs back is not so dangerous to the sheep, because they will not easily be drawn among such company; but when it gets into the flock, among professors that feed together, pray, hear, and walk in fellowship together, now is the fear it will spread. A loose erroneous professor doth the Devil more service in this kind, than a whole troop of such as pretend to no Religion. The Devil gets no credit by them. There are many errors and sinful practices which have long lain upon his hands, and he could not put them off, till he found this way to imploy some professors as his Brokers, to commend them to others, and disperse them for him: and if such do not ensnare and defile others by their unholy walking, to be sure they grieve their hearts, and put them to shame in the world. O how Christians hang down their heads upon the scandal of any of their company! as all the Patriarchs were troubled, when the cup was found in one of their sacks. And 'tis no small matter to make sad the hearts of God's people. In a word, he that keeps not up in some measure, the power of a holy life, renders himself useless and unprofitable; wouldst thou pray for others? *A Heretic could bid a wicked man hold his peace, and let the gods know he was in the ship, when a storm*

was on them: Would'st thou speak a word of comfort to any mournful Soul? O how unfavourable are comforts dropping from such a mouth? Would'st thou counsel another? Thy friend will think thou dost but jest, whatever thou sayest in commendation of holiness, he will not believe that thou thyself dost think it good, for then thou would'st take that thyself, which thou commendest to another.

Sixthly, Holiness and Righteousness, they are the Pillars of Kingdoms and Nations; who are they that keep the house from falling on a peoples head, but the righteous in a Nation? Ten righteous men (could they have been found in Sodom) had blown over the storm of fire and brimstone, that in a few hours entomb'd them in their own ashes; yea, the destroying Angels hands were tyed up, as it were, while but one righteous Lot was among them, *Haste thee, I can do nothing till thou beest come thither*, Gen. 19. 22. Rehoboam and his Kingdom for three years, were strengthened, and might have been three and twenty, if he had not by his unrighteousness pull'd it down upon himself and people; for his unhappiness is dated from the very time of his departure from God, 2 Chron. 11. 16. Josiah when he came to the Crown, found the Kingdom of Judah tumbling apace to ruine, yet because his heart was set for God, and prepared to walk before him, God took his bayl (as I may so say) for that wretched people, even when they were under an arrest from God, and almost at the Prison door, so that their safety was in a manner bound up in his life; for soon after his decease all went to wrack among them. It was an heroic speech of Luther, who fore-saw a black cloud of Gods judgements coming over the Land of Germany, but told some of his friends, *That he would do his best to keep it from falling in his dayes*; yea, he believ'd it should not; And, said he, *when I am gone, let them that come after me look to it*. This poor Nation of England, hath for many generations in a succession, had a number of precious, righteous ones, who have, through Gods grace, walk'd close with God, and been kept in a great degree unpotted from the defilements of the ungodly times they lived in. These were the Atlases of their several ages; these have oft found favour of God to beg the life of this Nation, when its neck hath been on the very block. But they are gone, or wearing away apace, and a new generation coming in their room; unhappy would the day be called when you were born, if you should be the men and women, that by degenerating from the power of holiness, should cut the banks (which was their chief care to keep up) and so let in a desolating judgement to overflow the Land. That heir we count unworthy of his birth and patrimony, who by his debauched courses, prodigally makes away that estate, which by the care and providence of his Ancestors, was through many descents at last transmitted to him; but together with the honour of the family, unhappily ends in him. It ever any age was like to do thus, by the place of their Nativity, this present, wherein our sad lot is cast to live, is it. How low is the power of holiness sink among us, to what it was but in the last gene-

ration? Religion alas runs low and dreggy among Professours, God he knows, that will not long suffer it. If Egypt knows a dearth is coming, by the low ebbing of Nilus; surely we may see a judgement to be coming, by the low fall of the power of godliness. There are great complaints of what men have lost in these hurling times; some bemoan their lost places and estates, others the lost lives of their friends in the wars; but Professours may claim justly the first place of all the mourners of the times, to lament their lost love to the truths of Christ, worship of Christ, servants of Christ; yea, that universal decay which appears in their holy walking before God and man. This is sad indeed; but that which adds a fearful aggravation to this, is, That we degenerate, and grow loose at a time when we are under the highest engagements for holiness that ever people did. We are a people redeem'd from many deaths and dangers; and when better might God expect us to be a righteous Nation? It is an ill time for a person to fall a stealing and pilfering again, as soon as the rope is off his neck, and he let safely come down that Ladder, from which he was even now like to be turned off. Surely it added to righteous Noah's sin, to be drunk as soon almost as he was set on shore, when a little before he had seen a whole World sinking before his eyes, and he, the privileged person, left by God to plant the World again with a godly seed. O Sirs, the Earth hath hardly yet drunk in the rivers of blood that hath been shed in our Land. The Cities and Towns have hardly got out of their ruines, which the miseries of War laid them in. The moans of the Fatherless and Husbandless, whom the Sword bereav'd of these their dearest relations, are not yet silenced by their own death; yea, can our own frights and scares which we were amazed with, when we saw the Nation (like a Candle lighted at both ends) on a flame, and every day the fire coming nearer and nearer to our selves, be so soon forgotten? Now, that at such a time as this, a Nation, and that the professing part of it, should grow looser, more proud, covetous, contentious, wanton in their principles, and careless in their lives, this must be for a Lamentation. We have little cause to boast of our peace and plenty, when the result of our deliverance is to deliver us up to commit such abominations; this is as if one whole quartan Ague is gone, but leaving him deep in a Dropsey, should brag his Ague hath left him, little thinking that when it went, it left him a worse guest in its place. An unhappy change, God knows it is, to have War, Pestilence, and Famine removed, and to be left swollen up with Pride, Errour, and Libertinism. Again, we are a People who have made more pretensions to righteousness and holiness, than our Fore-fathers ever did: What else meant the many Prayers to God, and Petitions to Man for Reformation? What Interpretation could a charitable heart make of our putting our selves under the bond of a Covenant, to endeavour for personal Reformation, and then National, but that we meant in earnest to be a more righteous Nation than ever before? This made such a loud report in foreign parts, that our Neighbour-Churches were set a wondering,

to think what these glorious beginnings might ripen to; so that now (having put forth these leaves, and told both God and man by them, what fruit was to be looked for from us) our present state must needs be nigh unto cursing, for disappointing the just expectations of both. Nothing can save the life of this our Nation, or lengthen out its tranquillity in mercy to it, but the recovery of the much decayed power of holiness. This, as a spring of

new blood to a weak body; would (though almost a dying) revive it, and procure many happy days; yea, more happy days to come over its head, than yet it hath seen; but alas! as we are degenerating from bad to worse, we do but die lingeringly, every day we fetch our breath shorter and shorter; if the Sword should be but drawn again among us, we have hardly strength to hold out another fit.

CHAP. VI.

Contains the first instance, wherein the Christian is to express the power of Holiness, and that is in his behaviour towards Sin; Branch'd into several particulars.

THE second particular into which the point was branched, comes now to be taken into hand; and that was to instance in some particulars, wherein every Christian is to express the power of a holy and righteous life. Now this I shall do under several heads.

First, Christian, be sure thou maintainest the power of holiness in thy contest with sin, which thou art to express in these particulars following.

First, Thou must not only refuse to commit broad sins, but shun the appearance of sin also; this is to walk in the power of holiness. The Dove doth not only flee from the Hawk, but will not smell so much as a single feather that falls from the Hawk. It should be enough to scare the holy soul from any enterprize, if it be but *male coloratum*. We are commanded *to hate the garments spotted with the flesh*, Jude 23. A cleanly person will not only refuse to wallow in the dung-hill (he is a beast indeed) but is careful also that he doth not get so much as a spot on his cloaths as he is eating his meat. The Christians care should be to keep, as his conscience pure, so his name pure, which is done by avoiding all appearance of evil. *Bernard's* three questions are worth the asking our selves in any enterprize: *An liceat? an deceat? an expediat? Is it lawful? may I do it, and not sin, Is it becoming me a Christian? may I do it, and not wrong my profession? that work which would suit a mean man, would it become a Prince? Should such a one as I flee?* said *Nehemiah* nobly, *Nehem. 6. 12.* Lastly, *Is it expedient?* may I do it, and not offend my weak brother? There are some things we must deny our selves of for others sake; though a man could sit his horse, and run him full speed without danger to himself; yet he should do very ill to come scouring thorow a Town, where children are in the way, that may be (before he is aware) rid over by him, and spoiled. Thus some things thou mayest do, and without sin to thee, if there were no weak Christians in thy way to ride over, and so bruise their tender consciences, and grieve their spirits. But alas! this is too narrow a path for many shaling professors to walk in now a-days; they must have more room and scope for their loose

hearts, or else they and their profession must part. Liberty is the *Diana* of our times. O what Apologies are made for some suspicious practices? long hair, gaudy garish apparel, spotted faces, naked breasts! these have been call'd to the Bar in former times, and censured by sober and solid Christians, as things at least suspicious, and of no good report; but now they have hit on a more favourable jury, that find them not guilty; yea, many are so fond of them, that they think Christian liberty is wronged in their censure; Professors are so far from a holy jealousy, that should make them watch their hearts, lest they go too far, that they stretch their consciences to come up to the full length of their tetter; as if he were the brave Christian that could come nearest the pit of sin, and not fall in; as in the *Olympian* games, he wore the Garland away, that could drive his Chariot nearest the mark, and not knock on it; if this were so, *Paul* mistook when he bade Christians *abstain from all appearance of evil*, *1 Thess. 5. 22.* he should rather have said by their mens divinity, *abstain not from the appearance*, only take heed of what is in it self grossely evil, but he that can venture on the appearance of evil, under pretence of liberty, may, for ought I know, commit that which is more grossely evil, under some appearance of good; it is not hard, (if a man will be at the cost) to put a good colour on a rotten stuff, and practice also.

Secondly, Thou must not only endeavour against all sin, but that on noble principles, here lies the power of holiness. Many forbear to sin upon such an unworthy account that God will not thank them for it another day. As it is in the actions of piety and charity, God makes no account of them, except he be interested in them; when we fast or pray, God asks, *Do you fast and pray to me, even to me?* *Zech. 7. 5.* when we give alms, a cup of cold water for his sake, given in the name of a Disciple, is more valued by him, than a cup of gold for private and low ends, *Math. 10. 42.* so in sin, God looks that his authority should conclude, and his love constrain us to renounce it; before the Commandments (as Princes before their Proclamations prefix their Arms and Royal Names) God sets his glorious Name, *God spake all these words, and said,*

said, &c. Exod. 20. and why this? But that we should sanctifie his Name in all we do. A Master may well think himself despised by that servant that still goes on, when he bids him leave off such a work, but has done presently at the entreaty of another. O how many are there that go on to sin, for all that God says to the contrary; but when their credit bids for shame of the world to give over such a practice, they can knock off presently; when their profit speaks, 'tis heard and obey'd. O Sirs, take heed of this, God expects his servants should not only do what he commands, but this at his command, and his only. And as in abstaining from evil, so in mourning for sins committed by us; if we will be Christians indeed, we must take in, yea, prefer Gods concernments before our own. Indeed it were to be wish'd, that some were so kind to their own souls, as to mourn for themselves when they have sinn'd; that they would cry out with *Lamech*, Gen. 4. 23. *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* Many have such brawny consciences, they do not so much as complain they have hurt themselves by their sins, but little of the power of holiness appears in all this; There may be a great cry in the conscience, I am damned, I have undone my self; and the dishonour that is cast upon God by him, not laid to heart. You remember what *Joab* said to *David*, taking on heavily for *Abishai's* death, *I perceive (said he) if Abishai had been alive, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well,* 2 Sam. 19. 6. Thus we might say to such selfish mourners, We perceive that if thou could'st but save the life of thy soul from eternal death and damnation, though the glory of God miscarry'd, thou could'st be pleased well enough. But know that a gracious Souls mourning runs in another channel; *against thee, thee only have I sinn'd*, is holy *David's* moan. There is a great difference between a servant that works for another, and one that is his own man (as we say) the latter puts all his losses upon his own head; so much, saith he, I have lost by such a ship, so much by a bargain; but the servant that trades with his Masters stock, he, when any loss comes, puts it on his Masters account; so much I have lost of my Masters goods. O Christian think of this; thou art but a servant, all the stock thou tradest with, is not thine, but thy Gods; and therefore when thou fallest into any sin, bewail it as a wrong to him: So much alas, I have dishonour'd my God, his talents I have wasted, his Name I have wounded, his Spirit I have grieved.

Thirdly, He must not only abstain from acting sin, but also labour to mortifie it. A wound may be hid, when 'tis not heal'd; cover'd, and yet not cured; some men they are like unskilful Physicians, who rather drive in the disease, than drive out the cause of the disease: corruption thus left in the bosome, like lime unslaked, or an humour unpurg'd, is sure at one time or other to take fire and break out, though now it lies peaceably, as powder in the barrel, and makes no noise: I have read, that the opening of a Chest where some cloaths were laid up, (not very well aired and cleared from the infection that had been in the house) was the cause of a great

Plague in *Venice*, after they had lain many years there, without doing any hurt. I am sure we see for want of pure mortification, many after they have walkt so long unblameably, as to gain the reputation of being Saints in the opinion of others, upon some occasion, like the opening of the Chest, have fallen sadly into abominable practices; and therefore it behoves us not to satisfie our selves with any thing less than a work of mortification, and that followed on from day to day. I protest, saith *Paul*, by my rejoycing in Christ, I die daily; here was a man walkt in the power of holiness; sin is like the *Beast*, Rev. 13. 3. which seem'd at one time, as if it would presently die of its wound, and by and by it was strangely healed so as to recover again; many a Saint for want of keeping a streight rein, and that constantly, over some corruption, which they have thought they had got the mastery of, have been thrown out of the saddle, and by it dragg'd dangerously into temptation, unable to resist the fury of lust when it has got head, till they have broken their bones with some sad fall into sin; if thou would'st, Christian, shew the power of holiness, never give over mortifying-work, no, not when thy corruptions play least in thy sight. He that is inclin'd to a disease, gout, stone, or the like, he must not only take physick when he hath a fit actually upon him, but ever and anon should be taking something good against it; so should the Christian, not only when he finds his corruption stirring, but every day keep his Soul in a course of spiritual physick, against the growing of it; this is holiness in its power. Many professors do with their Souls in this respect, as deceitful Chirurgeons with their Patients, lay on a healing-plaister one day, and a contrary the next day, that sets the cure back, more than the other set it forward; take heed of this, except thou meanest not only to bring the power of holiness into danger, but the very life and truth of it into question in thy Soul.

Fourthly, He must, as endeavour to mortifie corruption, so to grow and advance in the contrary grace. Every sin hath its opposite grace, as every poyson hath its antidote; he that will walk in the power of holiness, must not only labour to make avoidance of sin, but to get possession for the contrary grace. We read of a house that stood empty, Matth. 12. 44. *The unclean spirit went out,* but the holy Spirit came not in. That is, when a man is a meer negative Christian, he ceaseth to do evil in some ways he hath formerly walk'd in, but he learns not to do good. This is to lose heaven with short shooting; God will not ask us what we were not, but what we were; not to swear and curse will not serve our turn; but thou wilt be askt, Did'st thou bless and sanctifie Gods Name? It will not suffice thou did'st not persecute Christ, but did'st thou receive him? Thou did'st not hate his Saints, but did'st thou love them? Thou did'st not drink and swill, but wert thou fill'd with the Spirit? He is the skilful Physician, who at the same time that he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature; and he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside evil customes and practices,

practices, but labours to walk in the exercise of the contrary graces. Art thou discomposed with impatience, haunted with a discontented Spirit, under any affliction? Think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarrelling with God, but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy David drove it thus far, he did not only chide his Soul for being disquieted, but he charges it to trust in God, *Psalms 42. 5.* Hast thou any grudgings in thy heart against thy Brother? Think it not enough to quench these sparks of Hell-fire, but labour to kindle a heavenly fire of love to him, so as to set thee a praying heartily for him. I have known one, that when he had some envious unkind thoughts stirring in him, against any one, (as who so holy as may not find such vermine sometimes creeping about him?) he would not stay long from the Throne of grace, where, that he might enter the stronger protest against them, he would most earnestly pray for the increase of those good things in them, which he before had seem'd to grutch, and so revenged himself of those envious lustings, which at any time rose in his heart against others.

Fifthly, He must have a publick Spirit against the sins of others. A good Subject doth not only labour to live quietly under his Princes government himself, but is ready to serve his Prince against those that will not. True holiness (as true charity) begins at home, but it doth not confine its self within its own doors: It hath a zeal against sin abroad. He that is of a neutral Spirit, and Gallio-like, cares not what dishonour God hath from others, calls in question the zeal he expresseth against sin in his own bosome. When David would know the temper of his own heart, the furthest discovery, by all his search, that he could make of the sincerity of it, is his zeal against the sins of others: *Do not I hate them,*

O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies, *Psalms 139. 21, 22.* Having done this, he intreats God himself to ransack his heart, *Search me and try me, O God, if there be any wicked way found in me, &c. ver. 23.* As if he had said, Lord, my line will not reach to fathom my heart any further, and therefore if it be possible that yet any evil way may shroud itself under this, tell me, and lead me into the way everlasting.

Sixthly, The Christian, when he shews most zeal against sin, and hath greatest victory over it, even then must he renounce all fiduciary glorying in this. The excellency of Gospel-holiness consists in self-denial. *Though I were perfect* (saith Job) *yet would I not know my Soul,* *Job 9. 21.* that is, I would not be conceited and proud of my innocence; When a man is lift up with any excellency he hath, we say, *He knows it;* he hath excellent parts, *but he knows it;* that is, he reflects too much on himself, and sees his own face too oft in the glass of his own perfections. They who climb lofty mountains, find it safest, the higher they ascend, the more to bow, and stoop with their bodies, and so does the Spirit of Christ teach the Saints, as they get higher in their victories over corruption, to bow lowest in self-denial: *Jude 21.* The Saints are bid there, *To keep themselves in the love of God, and then to wait, and look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life.* And *Hosea 10. ver. 12.* *Sow to your selves in righteousness, reap in mercy.* We sow on Earth, we reap in Heaven. The seed we are to sow, is righteousness and holiness, which when we have done with greatest care and cost, we must not expect our reward from the hand of our righteousness, but Gods mercy.

CHAP. VII.

A second Instance, wherein the power of holiness is to appear in the Christians life, i. e. in the duties of Gods worship.

SEcondly, The Christian must exert the power of holiness in the duties of Gods worship. The same light that shews us a God, convinceth he is to be worshipt; and not only so, but that he will be worshipt in a holy manner also. God was very choice in all that belong'd to his worship under the Law. If he hath a *Tabernacle*, the place of worship, it must be made of the choicest materials; The workmen employed to make it, must be rarely gifted for the purpose; the Sacrifices to be offer'd up, the best in every kind, the males of the flock, the best of the beasts, the fat of the inwards, not the offals. The Persons that attend upon the Lord, and minister unto him, they must be peculiarly holy. What is the Gospel of all this? But that God is very curious in his worship; If in any action of our lives we be more holy than others, sure it is to be when we have to do with God immediately; Now this ho-

liness in duties of worship should appear in these Particulars.

First, In making conscience of one duty as well as another; the Christian must encompass all within his religious walk. It is dangerous to perform one duty, that we may dispense with our selves in the neglect of another. Partiality is hateful to God, especially in the duties of Religion, which have all a Divine stamp upon them. There is no Ordinance of Gods appointment, which he doth not bless to his people, and we must not reject what Gods owns; yea, God communicates himself with great variety to his Saints, now in this, anon in that; on purpose to keep up the esteem of all in our hearts. The Spouse seeks her Beloved in secret duties at home, and finds him not; then she goes to the publick, and meets him whom her Soul loves, *Cant. 3. 4.* Daniel no doubt had often visited the Throne of grace, and been

been a long trader in that duty, but God reserv'd the fuller manifestation of his love, and opening some secrets to him, 'till he did to ordinary prayer joyn extraordinary fasting and prayer; Then the Commandment came forth, and a messenger from heaven dispatcht to acquaint him with Gods mind and heart, *Dan. 9. 3.* compared with *v. 23.* There is no duty, but the Saints find at one time or another, the Spirit of God breathing sweetly in, and filling their souls from it, with more than ordinary refreshing. Sometimes the child sucks its milk from this breast, sometimes from that. *David* in meditation, while he was musing, finds a heavenly heat kindling in his bosome, till at last the fire breaks out, *Psal. 39. 3.* To the *Eunuch* in reading of the Word, is sent *Philip* to joyn to his chariot, *Acts 8. 27, 28.* To the *Apostles* Christ makes known himself in breaking of bread, *Luke 24. 35.* The Disciples walking to *Emaus*, and conferring together, presently have Christ fall in with them, who helps them to untie those knots which they were poled with, *Luke 24. 15.* *Cornelius* at duty in his house has a vision from heaven, to direct him in the way he should walk, *Acts 10. 3.* Take heed Christian, therefore thou neglectest not any one duty; how knowest thou, but that is the door at which Christ stands waiting to enter at into thy Soul? The Spirit is free, do not bind him to this or that duty, but wait on him in all. It is not wisdom to let any water run beside thy mill, which may be useful to set thy soul a-going heaven-ward. May be Christian, thou find'st little in those duties thou performest, they are empty breasts to thy soul. It is worth thy enquiry, whether there be not some other thou neglectest. Thou hearest the Word with little profit may be, I pray tell me, dost thou not neglect Sacraments? I am sure too many do, and that upon weak grounds God knows. And wilt thou have God meet thee in one Ordinance, who dost not meet him in another? or if thou frequentest all publick Ordinances, is not God a great stranger to thee at home, in thy house and closet? what communion dost thou hold with him in private duties? Here is a hole wide enough to lose all thou gettest in publick, if not timely mended. *Samuel* would not sit down to feast with *Jesse* and his sons, till *David*; though the youngest son, was secht, who was the only son that was wanting, *2 Sam. 16. 11.* If thou would'st have Gods company in any Ordinance, thou must wait on him in all; he will not have any willingly neglected. O fetch back that duty which thou hast sent away, though least in the eye, yet it may be 'tis that God means to crown with his choicest blessing in thy Soul.

Secondly, In a close and vigorous pursuance of those ends for which God hath appointed them. Now there is a double end which God chiefly aims at in the duties of his worship. First, God intends that by them we should do our homage to him as our Sovereign Lord. Secondly, he intends them to be as means through which he may let out himself into the bosomes of his children, and communicate the choicest of his blessings to them. Now here the power of holiness puts forth it self, when the

Christian attends narrowly to reach these ends in every duty he performs.

First, God appoints them for this end, that we may do our homage to him as our Sovereign Lord; were there not a worship paid to God, how should we declare, and make it appear that we hold our life and being of him? one of the first things that God taught *Adam*, and *Adam* his children, was Divine worship. Now if we will do this holily, we must make it our chief care, so to perform every duty, that by it we may sanctifie his Name in it, and give him the glory due unto it. A subject may offer a present after such a ridiculous fashion to his Prince, that he may count himself rather scorn'd than honour'd by him. The souldiers bowed the knee to Christ, but they mocked him, *Mat. 27. 29.* and so does God reckon many do by him, even while they worship him. By the carriage, and behaviour of our selves in religious duties, we speak what our thoughts are of God himself. He that performs them with a holy awe upon his spirit, and comes to them filled with faith and fear, with joy trembling, he declares plainly that he believes God to be a great God, and a good God, a glorious Majesty and a gracious; but he that is slightly and slovenly in them; tells God himself to his face, that he hath mean and low thoughts of him. The misbehaviour of a person in religious duties, ariseth from his misapprehensions of God whom he worships. What is engraven on the seal, you shall surely see printed on the wax: and what thoughts the heart hath of God, are stamped on the duties the man performs. *Abel* shew'd himself to be a holy man, and *Cain* appear'd a wicked wretch, in their sacrifice; And how? but in this, that *Abel* aim'd at that end which God intends in his worship (the sanctifying his Name,) which *Cain* minded not at all: As may appear by comparing *Abel's* sacrifice with his, in two particulars.

First, *Abel* is very choice in the matter of his sacrifice, not any of the flock that comes first to hand, but the firstlings; neither did he offer the lean of them to God, and save the fat for himself, but gives God the best of the best: But of *Cain's* offering, no such care is recorded to be taken by him, it is only said, that he brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord, *Gen. 4. 3, 4.* but not a word that it was the first fruit, or best fruit.

Again, *Abel* did not put God off with a beast or two for a sacrifice, but with them gives his heart also. By faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*, *Heb. 11. 4.* he gave God the inward worship of his Soul; and this was it that God took so kindly at his hands, for which he obtain'd a testimony from God himself, that he was righteous; whereas *Cain* thought it enough (if not too much) to give him a little of the fruit of the ground; had the wretch but considered who God was, and what his end in requiring an offering at his hands, he could not have thought rationally, that a handful or two of corn was that which he prized, or look'd at any further, than to be a sign of that inward and spiritual worship, which he expected

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to come along with the outward Ceremony. But he shewed what base and unworthy thoughts he had of God, and accordingly he dealt with him. O Christians, remember when you engage in any duty of Religion, that you go to do your homage to God, who will be worshipt like himself. *Curst be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen.* This made David so curious about the Temple, which he had in his heart to build, because the Palace was not for man, but the Lord God, 1 Chron. 29. 1. therefore, ver. 2. he saith, *He prepared with all his might for the House of his God.* Thus should the gracious Soul say, when going to any duty of Religion; 'Tis not man, but the Lord God, I am going to minister unto, and therefore I must be serious and solemn, holy and humble, &c.

Secondly, The second end God hath appointed Divine Ordinances, and religious duties for, is to be a means whereby he may let out himself to his people, and communicate the choicest of his blessings into their bosomes. *There (saith the Psalmist, speaking of the mountain of Zion, where the Temple stood, the place of Gods worship) commended be the blessing, even life for evermore,* Psal. 133. 3. that is, he hath appointed the blessing of life spiritual, grace and comfort, which at last shall swell into life eternal, to issue and stream thence. The Saints ever drew their water out of these wells. *Their Souls shall live that seek the Lord,* Psalm 69. 32. and their Souls must needs dye that seek not God here. The Husbandman may as well expect a crop, where he never ploughed and sowed; and the Tradesman to grow rich, who never opens his shop-doors to let customers in; as he to thrive in grace or comfort, that converseth not with the duties of Religion. The great things God doth for his people, are got in communion with him. Now here appears the power of holiness, when a Soul makes this his business, which he follows close, and attends to, in duties of Religion, to receive some spiritual advantage from God by them; as a Scholar, knowing he is sent to the University to get learning, gives up himself to

pursue this; and neglects other things; 'tis not riches or pleasures he looks after, but learning. Thus the gracious Soul bestirs him, and flies from one duty to another, as the Bee from flower to flower, to store it self with more and more grace; 'tis not credit and reputation to be thought a great Saint, but to be indeed such, that he takes all this pains for. The Christian is compared to a Merchant-man, that trades for rich Pearls; he is to go to Ordinances, as the Merchant that sailes from Port to Port, not to see places, but to take in his lading, some here, some there. A Christian should be as much ashamed to return empty from his traffique with Ordinances, as the Merchant to come home without his lading. But alas! how little is this look'd after by many that pass for great Professours? who are like some idle persons that come to the Market, not to buy provision, and carry home what they want, but to gaze and look upon what is there to be sold, to no purpose; O my Brethren, take heed of this. Idleness is bad any where, but worst in the Market-place, where so many are at work before thy eyes, who care for their Souls both adds to thy sin, and will another day to thy shame. Dost thou not see others grow rich in grace and comfort, by their trading with those Ordinances, from which thou comest away poor and beggarly? And canst thou see it without blushing? If thou hadst but a heart to propose the same end to thy Soul, when thou comest, thou might'st speed as well as they. God allows a free trade to all that do value Christ, and his grace, according to their preciousness. *Ho, everyone that is athirst, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price,* Esa. 55. 1. The Spirit of God seems in the judgement of some, to allude to a custome in Maritime Towns, where a Ship comes with commodities to be sold, they use to cry them about the Town, Oh, all that would have such and such Commodities, let them come to the Water-side, where they are to be had at such a price. Thus Christ calls every one that sees his need of Christ, and his graces, to the Ordinances, where these are to be freely had of all that come to them, for this very end.

CHAP. VIII.

A third Instance, wherein the power of holiness must appear, and that is in the Christians worldly employments.

Thirdly, the Christian must express the power of holiness in his particular calling, and worldly employments, that therein he is conversant with. Holiness must be writ upon those, as well as on his religious duties. He that observes the Law of building, is as exact in making a Kitchen, as in making a Parlour; so by the Law of Christianity, we must be as exact in our worldly business, as in duties of worship. *Be ye holy in all manner of conversation,* 1 Pet. 1. 15. We must not leave our Religion, as some

do their Bibles, at Church; As in man, the highest faculty (which is Reason) guides mans lowest actions, even those which are common to beasts, (such are eating, drinking, and sleeping,) man doth (that is, should, if he will deserve his own name) exercise these acts as Reason directs, he should shew himself in them a rational creature; so grace, that is the highest principle in a Christian, is to steer and guide him in those actions that are common to man, as man. The Christian is not to buy and

and fell as a meer man, but as a Christian man. Religion is not like that Statesmans gown, which when he went to recreate himself, he would throw off, and say, *There lye Lord Treasurer a while*: No, where-ever the Christian is, what-ever he is a doing, he must keep his Religion on, I mean do it holily. He must not do that in which he cannot shew himself a Christian. Now the power of holiness puts forth it self in our particular callings these wayes, but take them *conjunctive*, the beauty of holiness appears in the symmetry of all the parts together.

First, When the Christian is diligent in his particular calling; when God calls us to be Christians, he calls us indeed out of the world, as to our affections, but not out of the world, as to employment. It is true, when *Elisha* was called, he left his plough, and the *Apostles* their nets, but not as they were called to be Saints, but because they were called to the office in the Church, (though some in our days could find in their hearts to send the officers of the Church to the plough again) but upon how little reason let themselves judge, who find one trade (if it be well followed, and managed with a full stock) enough to find them work all the week; and sure the Minister, that has to do with, yea, provide for more souls, than they bodies, may find his head and heart as full of work in his calling, from one end of the year to the other, as any of them all; but I am speaking to the private Christian. Thou canst not be holy, if thou beest not diligent in a particular calling. The Law of man counts him a vagrant, that hath not a particular abiding place, and the Word of God counts him a disorderly person that hath not a particular calling, wherein to move and act for Gods glory, and the good of others. *We hear there are some which walk disorderly among you, working not at all*, 2 Thess. 3. 11. God would have his people profitable, like the sheep, which doth the very ground good it feeds on. Every one should be the better for a Christian. When *Onesimus* was converted, he became profitable to *Paul* and *Philemon* also, *Philem.* 11. to *Paul* as a Christian, to *Philemon* as a servant; grace made him of a runaway, a diligent servant. An idle professor is a scandalous professor. An idle man does none good, and himself most hurt.

Secondly, When he is not only diligent, but for Conscience sake. There are many are free enough of their pains in their particular callings, they need no spur; but what sets them on work? Is it Conscience, because God commands it? Oh no! then they would be diligent in their general calling also; They would pray as hard as they work, they then would knock off, as well as fall on at Gods command; if Conscience were the key that open'd their shop on the week-day, it would shut it on the Lords-day. When we see a man, like the Hawk, fly after the worlds prey, and will not come to Gods lure, though Conscience bids in his name Come off, and wait on thy God in this duty in thy family, that in thy closet, but still goes on his worldly chase; he shews plain enough whose errand he goes on, not of Conscience, but his Lusts. But if thou wilt walk in the power of holiness, thou must be diligent in

thy calling on a religious account; that which makes thee *servant in prayer*, must make thee *not slothful in business*. Thou maist say, This is the place God hath set me in, I am but his servant in my own shop, and here I must serve him as I would have my Prentice or Child serve me, yea, much more, for they are not mine, so much as I am his.

Thirdly, When he expects the success of his labour from God, and accordingly, if he speeds gives his humble thanks to God. Indeed they go together, he that doth not the one, will nor the other. The worldling that goes not through his closet by prayer, into his shop in the morning, when he enters upon his business, no wonder if he returns not at night by his closet, in thankfulness to God. He began without God, it were strange if he should end in him. The Spider that spins her web out of her own bowels, dwells in it when she hath done; and men that carry on their enterprizes by their own wit and care, entitle themselves to what they think they have done; they will sooner sacrifice (as they *to their net and drag*; Job 8. Habak. 1. 16.) to their own wisdom and industry, than to God; such a wretch I have lately heard of in our dayes, who being by a neighbour excited to thank God for a rich crop of corn he had standing on his ground, atheistically replied; *Thank God? nay, rather thank my dung-cart*. The speech of a dung-hill spirit, more filthy than the muck in his cart; but if thou wilt be a Christian, thou must *acknowledge God in all thy ways*, *not leaning to thine own understanding*; and this will direct thee to him, when success crowns thy labours, to crown God with the praise. *Jacob* laboured as diligently, and took as much pains for the estate he had at last, as another, yet having the foundation of all in prayer, and expecting the blessing from heaven, *Gen.* 28. 20. he ascribes all that fair estate he at last was possesst of, to the mercy and truth of God, whom he had in his poor state (when with his pilgrim-staff, he was travelling to *Padan-Aran*) engaged by a solemn vow to provide for him, *Gen.* 32. 10.

Fourthly, When the Christian is content with the portion (little or much) that God upon his endeavours allots him; not content, because he cannot have it otherwise. Necessity was the Heathens School-master to teach contentment; but faith must be the Christians, whereby he acquiesces in the dispositions of Gods providence with a sweet complacency as in the Will of God concerning him. Here is godliness in triumph; when the Christian can carve contentment out of Gods providence, whatever the dish is that is set before him; if he gathers little, he lacks not, but is satisfied with his short meal; if he gathers much, he hath nothing over; I mean, not more than his grace can well digest, and turn to good nourishment; nothing over, that turns to bad humours of pride and wantonness. This was the pitch *Paul* attain'd unto, *Phil.* 4. 14. *He knew how to abound, and how to want*. Take contentation from godliness, and you take one of the best jewels away she wears in her bosome, *Godliness with contentment is great gain*; not godliness with an estate, but godliness with contentment, 1 Tim. 6. 16.

Fifthly, When the Christians particular calling doth not encroach upon his general. Truly this requires a strong guard. The world is of an encroaching nature; hard it is to converse with it, and not come into bondage to it; as *Hagar* (when *Abraham* shew'd her some respect more than ordinary) began to contest with, yea, crow over her *Mistress*; so will our worldly employments jostle with our heavenly, if we keep not a strict hand over them. Now the power of holiness appears here in two things; first, when the Christian suffers not his worldly business to eat up his time for communion with God, but keeps it inviolable from the sacrilegious hands of the world. The Christian may observe (that if he will listen to it) he shall never think of setting about any religious duty, but some excuse or other (to put it off) will present it self to his thoughts; This thing must be just now done, that friend spoken with, or customer waited for; so that (as the *Wise man* saith) *He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap*, Eccl. 11. 4. so he that will regard what his own sloth, worldly interest, and fleshly part suggests; he shall never pray, meditate, or hold communion with God in any other religious duty; O 'tis sad! when the Master must ask the man leave when to eat, and when not; when the Christian must take his orders from the world, when to wait on God and when not, whereas Religion should give Law to that. Then holiness is in its power (as *Sampson* in his strength) when it can snap asunder these excuses that would keep him from his God, as easily as he did his cords of flax: when the Christian can make his way into the presence of God, through the throng of worldly encumbrances; Behold (saith *David*) *I have in my trouble prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand Talents of Gold, and a thousand thousand Talents of silver*, &c. 1 Chron. 22. 14. He had waies enough to have disposed of his treasures, if he would have been discouraged from the work; he might have had a fair Apology from the Wars he was all his Reign involved in, (which were continually draining his *Exchequer*) to have spared this cost. But as *Rome* shew'd her puissance in sending succours to *Spain*,

when *Hannibal* was at her Gates; so *David* will shew his zeal for God and his house, by laying aside such vast sums for the building of a Temple in the midst of the troubles and expences of his Kingdom. He is the Christian indeed that laies aside a good portion of time daily, in the midst of all his worldly occasions for communion with God; whoever he compounds with and paises short, he dares not make bold with God, to serve him by halves. He shall have his time devoted to him, though others are put off with the less; like that devout man, who when his time for his devotions came, what company soever he was with, would take his leave of them with this fair excuse, *he had a friend that said to speak with him* (he meant his God.) Secondly, when his worldly employments do not turn the edge of his affections, and leave a bluntness upon his spirit, as to holding communion with God; here is holiness in the power; as the husband, when he hath been abroad all day, in this company and that, yet none of these makes him love his wife and children the less; when he comes home at night he brings his affections to them as intire as when he went out; yea, he is glad he is got from all others to them again. This is a sweet frame of spirit indeed; but alas how hard to keep it? canst thou say, O Christian, after thou hast past a day, amidst thy worldly profits, and been entertain'd with the delight and pleasures which thy full estate affords thee, that thou bringst thy whole heart to thy God with thee, when at night thou returnest into his presence to wait on him? thou canst say more than many can, that have some good in them. O 'tis hard to converse with the world all day, and shake it off at night, so as to be free to enjoy privacy with God. The World does by the Christian, as the little child by the mother; if it cannot keep the mother from going out, then it will cry after her to go with her; if the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, then it will cry to be taken along with us, and much ado to part it and the affections.

Fourthly, The Christian must express the power of holiness in his carriage and behaviour to others; and they are either within doors, or without.

CHAP. IX.

Of expressing the power of Holiness, in and to our Family-relations.

First, To his Family-relations. Much, though not all of the power of godliness, lies within doors, to those that God hath there related us unto. It is in vain to talk of holiness, if we can bring no letters testimonial from our holy walking with our relations. O 'tis sad, when they that have reason to know us best, (by their daily converse with us) do speak least for our godliness; few so impudent as to come naked into the streets; if men have any thing to cover their naughtiness, they will put it on when they come abroad. But what art thou within doors? what care and conscience to

discharge thy duty to thy near relations? He is a bad husband, that hath money to spend among company abroad, but none to lay in provisions to keep his family at home. And can he be a good Christian that spends all his religion abroad, and leaves none for his nearest relations at home? that is a great zealot among strangers, and little or nothing of God comes from him in his family? yea, it were well, if some that gain the reputation for Christians abroad, did not fall short of others, that pretend not to profession, in those moral duties, which they should perform to their relations; There are some, who

who are great strangers to profession, who yet are loving and kind in their way to their Wives; what kind of Professors then are they, who are dogged and curst to the Wife of their bosoms? Who by their tyrannical Lording it over them, imbitter their spirit, and make them *cover the Lords Altar with tears and weeping*? There are Wives to be found, that are not clamorous, peevish, and froward to their Husbands, who yet are far from a work of true grace in their hearts; do they then walk as becomes holiness, who trouble the whole house with their violent passions? There are Servants, who from the authority of a natural conscience, are kept from railing and reviling language; when reproved by their Masters: And shall not grace keep pace with nature? Holy *David* knew very well, how near this part of the Saints duty lyes to the very heart of godliness; and therefore when he makes his solemn vow, to walk holily before God, he instanceth in this, as one Stage whereon he might eminently discover the graciousness of his Spirit, *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart*, Psal. 101. 2. But to instance in a few particulars, wherein the power of holiness is to appear, as to Family-relations.

First, In the choice of our Relations, such I mean as are eligible. Some are not in our choice. The Child cannot choose what Father he will have, nor the Father what Child. But where God allows a liberty, he expects a care.

1. Art thou godly, and wantest a service? O take heed, thou shewest thy holiness in the Family thou choolest, and the Governours thou puttest thy self under. Enquire more, whether it be a healthful air for thy Soul within doors, than for thy Body without. The very fenceless creatures groan to serve the ungodly World, and (if capable of choosing) would count it their liberty to serve the *Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 21. And wilt thou voluntarily, when thou maist prevent it, run thyself under the government of such as are ungodly, who art thy self a child of God? 'Tis hard to serve two Masters, though much alike in disposition; but impossible to serve those two, a holy God, and a wicked ungodly man or woman, so as to please them both. But, if thou beest under the roof of such a one, forget not thy duty to them, though they do forget their duty to God; possibly thy faithfulness to them, may bring them to enquire after thy God, for thy sake, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did for *Daniels*. No doubt wicked men would take up Religion, and the ways of God, more seriously into their consideration, if there were a more heavenly lustre and beauty upon Christians lives in their several relations to invite them thereunto; sometimes a Book is read the sooner for the fairness of the characters, which would have been not much look'd in, if the print had been naught. O how oft do we hear, that the thoughts of Religion are thrown away with scorn by wicked Masters, when their professing Servants are taken false, appear proud and undutiful, slothful or negligent? What then follows, but, Is this your Religion? God keep me from such a Religion as this. O commend the ways of God to thy carnal and ungodly Master or Mistress, by a clear unblotted con-

versation in thy place. But withal, let me tell thee, if (doing thy utmost in thy place to promote Religion in the family) thou seeest that the soil is so cold, that there is no visible hope of planting for God, it is time, high time to think of transplanting thy self; for it is to be fear'd the place which is so bad to plant in, will not, cannot be very good for thee to grow and thrive in.

2. Art thou a godly Master? When thou takest a Servant into thy house, choose for God as well as thy self. Remember there is work for God to be done by thy Servant, as well as thy self; and shall he be fit for thy turn, that is not for his? Thou desirest the work should prosper thy Servant takes in hand; dost not? And what ground hast thou from the promise to hope that the work should prosper in his hand, that sins all the while he is doing of it? *The plowing of the wicked is sin*, Prov. 21. 4. A godly Servant is a greater blessing than we think on. He can work, and set God on work also for his Masters good, Gen. 24. 12. O Lord God of my Master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my Master. And sure, he did his Master as much service by his prayer, as by his prudence in that journey. If you were but to plant an Orchard, you would get the best fruit-trees, and not cumber your ground with crabs. There's more loss in a graceless Servant in the House, than a fruitless tree in the Orchard. Holy *David* observed while he was at *Saul's* Court, the mischief of having wicked and ungodly Servants, (for with such was that unhappy King so compassed, that *David* compares his Court to the prophane and barbarous Heathens, among whom there was scarce more wickedness to be found, Psal. 120. 6. *Wo is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar*; that is, among those who were as prodigiously wicked as any there.) And no doubt, but this made this gracious man in his banishment, before he came to the Crown, (having seen the evil of a disordered house) to resolve what he will do, when God should make him the Head of such a Royal family, Psal. 101. 7. *He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lyes, shall not tarry in my sight*. He instanceth in those sins, not as if he would spend all his zeal against these, but because he had observed them principally to abound in *Saul's* Court, by which he had suffered so much, as you may perceive by Psal. 120. 2, 3.

3. Art thou godly? Shew thy self so in the choice of a Husband or Wife. I am sure, if some (and those godly also) could bring no other testimonial for their godliness, than the care they have taken in this particular, it might justly be call'd into question, both by themselves and others. There is no one thing that gracious persons (even those recorded in Scripture, as well as others) have shewn their weakness, yea, given offence and scandal more in, than in this particular. *The Sons of God saw that the Daughters of men were fair*, Gen. 6. 2. One would have thought the Sons of God should have look'd for grace in the heart, rather than beauty in the face; but we see, even they sometimes turn in at the fairest sign, without much enquiring what grace is to be found

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found dwelling within. But Christian, let not the miscarriage of any in this particular (how holy soever otherwise) make thee less careful in thy choice. God did not leave their practice on record for thee to follow, but shun. He is but a slovenly Christian, that will swallow all the Saints do, without paring their actions. Is it not enough, that the wicked break their necks over the sins of Saints? but wilt thou run upon them also to break thy shins? Point not at this man, and that godly woman, saying, They can marry into such a prophane family, and lye by the side of a Drunkard, Swearer, &c. Look to the rule, O Christian, if thou wilt keep the power of holiness. That is clear as a Sun-beam writ in the Scripture, *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* 2 Cor. 6. 14. And where he gives the Widow leave to marry again, he still remembers to bound this liberty: *To whom she will, only in the Lord,* 1 Cor. 7. 39. Mark that, *In the Lord*; that is, in the Church; all without the Faith, are without God in the world. The Lords kindred and family is in the Church; you marry out of the Lord, when you marry out of the Lords kindred; or, *in the Lord*, that is, in the fear of the Lord, with his leave and liking. The Parents consent is fit to be had, we all yield; and is not thy heavenly Father's? And will he ever give his consent thou shouldst bestow thy self on a Beast, a Sot, an Earth-worm? Holy men have paid dear for such matches; What a woful plague was *Dalilah* to *Samson*? And *Michal* none of the greatest comforts to *David*; had he not better have married the poorest Damofel in *Israel*, if godly, (though no more with her but the cloaths on her back) than such a sleering companion, that mock'd him for his zeal to his God?

Secondly, In labouring to interest God in our Relations. The Christian cannot indeed propagate grace to his Child, nor joynture his Wife in his holiness, as he may in his Lands; yet he must do his utmost to entitle God to them. Why did God command *Abraham*, that all his house should be circumcised? Surely he would have him go as far as he could, to draw them into affinity with, and relation to God. Near relations call for dear affections. Grace doth not teach us to love them less than we did, but to love them better. It turns our love into a spiritual channel, and makes us chiefly desire their eternal good; what singular thing else is in the Christians love above others? Do not the Heathens lay up estates for their children here? Are not they careful for their servants backs and bellies, as well as others? Yes sure, but your care must exceed theirs. I remember *Augustine*, speaking how highly some commended his Fathers cost and care to educate him, even above his estate, makes this sad complaint: *Cum interea non satageret Pater, qualis crescerem tibi, dummodo essem disertus, vel potius desertus à cultura tuâ Deus!* Whereas (saith he) my Fathers drift in all was, not to train me up for thee; his project was, that I might be eloquent, an Orator, not a Christian. O my Brethren, if God be worth your acquaintance, is he not worth theirs also, that are so near and dear to you? One house now holds you,

would you not have one Heaven receive you? Can you think (without trembling) that those who live together in one family, should, when the house is broken up by death, go one to Hell, another to Heaven? Surely you are like to have little joy from them on Earth, who you fear shall not meet you in Heaven. By *Lycurgus* his Law, the Father that gave no learning to his child when young, was to lose that succour which was due from his child to him in his old age. The righteousness of that Law, though I dare not assert, yet this I may say, what he unjustly commanded, God doth most righteously suffer; that those who do not teach their children their duty to God, lose the honour and reverence which should be paid them by their children; and so of other relations also.

Thirdly, Take heed thy Relations be not a snare to thee, or thou to them. There are such sad families to be found, who do nothing else but lead one another into temptation, by drawing forth each the others corruption, from one end of the year to the other; what can we call such families, but so many Hells above ground? A man may live with as much safety to his body in a Pest-house, as he can there to his Soul. And truly the godly are not so far out of danger, but that the Devil may make use of their passions to royl and defile one another. I am sure he is very ambitious to do them a mischief this way, and too often prevails. *Abraham's* fear laid the snare for *Sarah* his Wife, who was easily perswaded to dissemble for him she loved so dearly, *Gen.* 12. 23. And *Rebecca's* vehement affection to *Jacob*, together with the reverence both her place and grace commanded in *Jacob's* heart, made him, of a plain man, become the subtil man, to deceive his Father and Brother; which, though it was too broad a sin for him at first proposal to swallow, as appears, *Gen.* 27. 12. *I shall seem to him to be a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing*; yet with a little art used by his Mother, we see the passage was widened, and down it went for all his first straining at it; and yet both godly persons. Look therefore to thy self, that thou dost not bring sin upon thy relations. It would be a heavy affliction to thee, to see thy Wife, Child or Servant, sick of the Plague, which thou brought'st home to them; or bleeding by a wound which thou unawares gavest them; Alas, better thus, than be infected with sin, wounded with guilt, by thy means. And be as careful to antidote thy Soul against receiving infection from them, as breathing it on them. Thy love is great to thy Wife; O let it not make the Apple of temptation the more fair or desirable, when offer'd to thee by her hand. Thou lovest thy self, yea, thy God too little, if her so much, as to sin for her sake. Thou art a dutiful Wife, but obey in the Lord; take heed of turning the Tables of the Commandments, by setting the seventh before the first. Be sure to save Gods stake, before thou payest thy obedience to thy Husband; say to thy Soul, Can I keep Gods command in obeying my Husbands? In paying of debts, those should be first discharged, which are due by the most, and those the greatest obligations. And to whom thou art deepest bound, God, or thy

thy Husband, is easie to resolve ; thus in all other relations. Go as far with thy relations as thou canst travel in Gods company, and no further, as thou would'st not leave thy holiness and righteousness behind thee, the loss of which is too great, that thou should'st expect they can recompence unto thee.

Fourthly, Then Holiness is in its power as to our relations, when the Christian is careful to improve the graces of his relations, and get what good from them he can while they are with them ; May be thou hast a holy Father, a gracious Husband or Wife ; let it be but a Servant in the family that is godly, there is good to be got by his gracious conversation, speeches ; and holiness, like ointment, will betray it self, where-ever it staves awhile. O Christian, if any such holy person be with thee in the family, observe what such a one in his speeches, duties of worship, behaviour under affliction, receipt of mercies, returns of Sabbaths and Ordinances, and such like, affords for thy instruction, quickening and promoting in the ways of holiness. The Prophet bad the Widow bring all the Vessels she had, or could borrow, to catch what should fall from the Pot of Oyl that she had in the house, and therewith pay her debts, 2 Kings 4. 3. Truly, I think it were good counsel to some that complain (or may justly if they do not) how poor and beggarly they are in grace, to make an improvement of that holy oyl of grace, which drops from the lips and lives of their godly relations ; set your memories, consciences, hearts and affections, as vessels to receive all the expressions of holiness that come from them ; thy Memory, let that keep and retain the instructions, reproofs, comforts, drawn by them out of the Word ; thy Conscience, that applies these to thy own Soul, till from thence they distil into thy affections, and thou becomest in love more and more with holiness thy own self, from their recommendation of it to thee. It is a sad thing to consider what different use a naughty heart makes of the gifts and graces of the godly, with whom they live, (as they sparkle forth)

to what an humble sincere one doth. A naughty heart does but envy and malign such a one the more, and instead of getting good, is made worse ; whereas the sincere Soul he labours to treasure up all for his good. When Joseph told his Prophetick Dream to his Brethren, their envy, which before lay smothering in their breasts, took fire presently, and awhile after flamed forth into that unnatural cruelty practised upon him by them. There was all the use they made of it ; but of good Jacob, 'tis said, by way of opposition to them, Gen. 37. 11. *His brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying ;* he laid it up for future use, as that which had something of God in it. Thus Christian, do thou by the holy breathings of the Spirit in those thou livest with.

Note the remarkable passages of their gracious conversations, as thou would'st do the notions of some excellent book, which is not thine own, but lent thee for a time to peruse : Indeed upon these terms, and no surer, do we enjoy our gracious friends and relations. They are but lent us for a while, and improve them, or not improve them, they will be call'd for ere long ; And will it be for thy comfort to part with them, before thou hast had a heart to get good by them ? It was a solemn speech of that Reverend holy man of God, Mr. Bolton, to his children, when on his death-bed, *I charge you, O my children, not to meet me at the great day before Christs Tribunal in a Christless, graceless condition.* God keeps an exact account of the means he affords us for our salvation, and the lives of his holy servants are not of the lowest rank ; you shall observe that God is very curious in Scripture, to record the time how long his faithful servants lived on earth ; and sure among other reasons, he would have us know, that he means to reckon with those that lived with them, for every year, yea, day and hour they had them among them. They shall know they had a Prophet, a father, husband, that were godly, and that they had them so long, and God will know of them what use they made of them.

CHAP. X.

Of exercising the power of Holiness in our carriage to our neighbours without doors.

Secondly, Thy righteousness to others must not stay within doors, but walk out into the streets, and visit thy neighbours round. Thy behaviour to, and conversation with them must be holy and righteous. In Scripture, *Righteousness*, and living righteously, do oft import the whole duty of the Christian to his neighbour ; and so stands distinguished from *Piety*, which hath God for its immediate object ; and *sobriety* or *temperance*, which immediately respects our selves. See them all together, Tit. 2. 12. where, *the grace of God that bringeth salvation, is said to teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* He that would be the death of all these three, needs do no

more but stab one of them, no matter which ; the life of holiness will run out at any door, here or there, where-ever the wound is given. 'Tis true indeed, there is a moral righteousness, which leaves us short of true holiness ; but no true holiness that leaves us short of moral righteousness. Though the sensitive soul be found in a beast without the rational, yet the rational soul is not found in man without the sensitive. Grace and Evangelical holiness being the higher principle, includes and comprehends the other within it self. This is the dignity and honour due to Christianity, and the principle it lays down in the Gospel, (the enemies of it being judges) that though some who profess it are none of the best,

best, yet they learn not their unrighteousness of it; may true it is what one faith, *No Christian can be bad, except he be an hypocrite*. Either therefore renounce thy baptism, or abominate the thoughts of all unrighteousness; to be sure thou might'st escape better, if thou wouldst let the world know thou didst claim no kindred with Christ, before thou practisest such wickedness; some are unresolved where to find *Aristides, Socrates, Cato*, and some few other Heathens, eminent for their moral righteousness, whether in heaven or hell; but, were there ever any that doubted what would become of the unrighteous Christian in the other world? Hell gapes for these above all others; *Know ye not (saith the Apostle) that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of G Q D?* 1 Cor. 6. 9. as if he had said, Sure you have not so far lost the use of your reason, to think that there is any room for such cattel as these in heaven. And if not the unrighteous, what crevis of hope is left for their salvation, whose unrighteousness hath a thousand times more malignity in it, than any others in the world is capable of? the heathen shall for their unrighteousness be indicted, and condemned as rebels to the Law; so shall the unrighteous Christian also, and that more deeply. But the charge which is incomparably heaviest, and will lay weight upon him far above the other, is, that which the Gospel brings in, That by his unrighteousness he hath been an *enemy to the Cross of Christ*, Phil. 3. 18. Indeed, if a man had a mind to shew his despight to the heighth against Christ and his Cross, the Devil himself could not help him to express it more fully, than to cloath himself with a gaudy profession of the Gospel, and with this wrapt about him, to rowl himself in the kennel of sordid base practices of unrighteousness. O how it makes the prophane world blaspheme the Name of Christ, and abhor the very profession of him, when they see any of this filth upon the face of their conversation, who take the Name of Saints to themselves more than others do! what? shall that tongue lye to man, that even now prayed so earnestly to God? those eyes be sent on lusts or envies errand, that a few moments past thou tookest off the Bible, from reading those sacred Oracles? Those hands in thy neighbours pocket to rob him of his estate, which were not long ago stretched forth so devoutly to heaven? Those legs carry thee to day into thy shop or market to cheat and cozen, which yesterday thou wentest with to worship God in the publick?

In a word, dost thou think to commune with God, so as by a greater semblance of outward zeal to God in the first Table to obtain a dispensation in point of righteousness to man in the second? Will thy pretended love to God excuse the malice and rancour, which thy heart swells with against thy neighbour? thy devotion to God, disoblige thee from paying thy debts to man? God forbid thou shouldst think so; but if thou dost, *Peter's counsel to Simon Magus*, is mine to thee, *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*, Act. 8. 22. In the Name of God I charge every one that wears

Christ's livery, to make conscience of this piece of righteousness, as you would not bring upon your heads the vengeance of God for all those blasphemies, which the nakedness of some professors in this particular, yea, base practices of some hypocrites, have given occasion to be belched out by the ungodly world against Christ and the good wayes of holiness. Now the power of holiness (as to this particular) will be preserv'd, when these two things are look'd to.

First, When our care is uniform, and equally distributed, to endeavour the performing of one duty we owe to our neighbour as well as another. For we must know, there is a righteousness that (as one faith) runs through every precept, as it were the veins of every Law in the second Table; and calls for obedience due to Parents Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical, in the fifth Command, our care to preserve our neighbours life in the sixth, chastity in the seventh, estate in the eighth, good name in the ninth; and our desires in their due bounds, against coveting what is our neighbours in the tenth. Now as health in the body is preserv'd by keeping the passages of life open, for the spirits freely to move from one part to another (which once obstructed from doing their office in any part, the health of the body is presently in danger;) So here the spirit and life of holiness is preserv'd in the Christian, by a holy care and endeavour to keep the heart free and ready to pass from doing one duty he owes his neighbour to another, according to the several walks that are in every command for him to move in.

Secondly, As our care must be uniform; so the motive and spring within that sets us at work, and makes all these wheels move, must be Evangelical. The command is a road in which both Heathen, Jew and Christian may be found travelling: How now shall we know the Christian from the other, when Heathen and Jew also walk along with him in the same duty, seem as dutiful children, obedient wives, loyal subjects, loving neighbours, as the Christian himself? Truly if it be not in the motive from which, and end to which he acts, nothing else can do it. Look therefore well to this, or else thou art out of thy way, while thou seemest to be in the road. It is very ordinary for men to wrong Christ, when they do their neighbour right; and this is done when Christ is not interested in the action; and love to him doth not move us thereunto; without this thou mayest go for an honest Heathen, but canst not be a good Christian. Suppose a servant were entrusted by his Master to go and pay such a man a sum of money, which he doth, yet not out of any dutiful respect to the command, or love to the person of his Master, but for shame of being taken for a Thief: In this case, the man should have his due; but his Master a great deal of wrong; such wrong do all meer civil persons do the Lord Jesus; they are very exact and righteous in their dealings with their neighbours, but very injurious at the same time to Christ, because they do not this upon his account. This makes love to our neighbour Evangelical, and as Christ calls it a *new Commandment*,

mandment, Joh. 13. when our love to our brother takes fire from his love to us. We cannot in a Gospel-sense be said to do the duty of any Commandment, except we first love Christ, and then for his sake do it. *If you love me, keep my Commandments,* Joh. 14. 15. where observe, that as God prefixt

his Name before the Decalogue; so Christ for the same reason doth his, before the Christians obedience to any of them, that so they may keep them both as his commandments, and out of love to him, who hath brought us out of a worse house of bondage than Egypt was to Israel.

CHAP. XI.

Directions for holiness

Contains nine or ten Directions towards the helping those that desire to maintain the power of a holy righteous conversation.

see page 99

3. **T**HE third thing propounded in handling the point, calls now for our dispatch; and that is to lay down some Directions by way of counsel, and to help all those that desire to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in their daily walking.

SECT. I.

First, Be sure thou gettest a good foundation laid, on which may be rear'd the beautiful structure of a holy righteous conversation; and that can be no less than the change of thy heart by the powerful working of Gods sanctifying Spirit in thee. Thou must be righteous and holy, before thou canst live righteously and holily. If the Ship hath not its right make at first, be not equally poys'd according to the Law of that Art, it will never sail trim; and if the heart be not moulded a-new by the workmanship of the Spirit, and fashion'd according to the Law of the new creature, in which old things pass away, and all things become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. the creature will never walk holily; 'tis solid grace in the vessel, in the heart that feeds profession in the lamp, holiness is the life, Math. 25. 4. Now this thorough-change of thy heart is especially to be look'd at in these two things.

First, That there be a change made in thy judgement of, and disposition of heart to sin; thou hast formerly had such a notion of sin as hath made it desirable; thou hast look'd upon it as Eve did on the forbidden fruit; thou hast thought it pleasant to the eye, good for food, and worth thy choice to be desired of thee; if thou continuest of the same mind, thy teeth will be watering, and heart continually hankering after it; thou maist possibly be kept from expressing and venting the inward thought of thy heart for a while; but as two lovers kept asunder by their friends, will one time or other make an escape to each other, so long as their affection is the same it was; so wilt thou to thy lust; and therefore never rest till thou canst say, thou dost as heartily loath and hate sin as ever thou loved'st it before.

Secondly, Look that there be such a change in thy judgement, and heart, as makes thee take an inward complacency and delight in Christ, and his holy Commands. Then there is little fear of thy degenerating, when thou art tyed to him and his

service, by the heart-strings of love and complacency. The Devil finds it no hard work to part him and his duty, that never joy'd, nor took true content in doing of it. He whose calling doth not like him, nor fit his genius (as we say) will never excel in it. A Scholar learns more in a week, when he comes to relish learning, and is pleased with its sweet taste, than he did in a month, when he went to School to please his Master, (whom he fear'd) not himself. Observe any person in the thing wherein he takes high content, and he is more careful and curious about that than any other; if his heart be on his Garden, O how neatly it is kept! it shall lie as we say, in print; all the rare roots and slips that can be got for love or money, shall be sought for. Is it beauty that one delights in; how curious and nice is such a one in dressing her self? she hardly knows when she is fine enough. Truly thus it is here, a soul that truly loves Christ, delights in holiness; all his strength is laid out upon them; may he but excel in this one thing, be more holy, more heavenly, he will give others leave to run before him in anything else.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Be sure to keep thy eye on the right rule thou art to walk by. Every calling hath a rule to go by, peculiar to its self, which requires some study to get an insight into, without which a man will but bungle in his work. No calling hath such a sure Rule and perfect Law to go by, as the Christians; Therefore in earthly professions, and worldly callings, men vary in their way and method, though of the same trade, because there is no such perfect rule, but another may super-add to it. But the Christian hath one standing rule, the Word of God, able to make the man of God perfect; now he that would excel in the power of holiness must study this. The Physician he consults with his Galen; the Lawyer with his Littleton; and the Philosopher with his Aristotle; the Masters of these Arts. How much more should the Christian with the Word, so as to be determined by that, and drawn by that, more than by a whole team of arguments from men? *We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,* saith Paul, 2 Cor. 13. 8. O Christian! when credit votes this way, friends and relations that way; when profit bids thee do

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this, and pleasure that, say, as *Jehoshaphat* concerning *Micaiah*, *Is there not here a Prophet of the Lord besides, that I may enquire of him?* 1 Kings 22. 7. Is there not the Word of God that I may be concluded by it, rather than by any of these lying Prophets? Now there are three ways that men go contrary to this direction, all of them destructive to the power of holiness; some walk by no rule; some by a false rule; and a third by the true rule, but partially. The first is the *Antinomist* and *Libertine*; the second is the *superstitious Zealot*; the third is the *Hypocrite*; beware of all these, except thou meanest to lay the knife to the throat of holiness.

First, Take heed thou dost not take away the Rule God sets before thee, with the *Antinomist* and *Libertine*, who say the Law is not a rule to the Christian. These must needs make crooked lines in their lives, that live by rote, and not by rule. I had thought, *Christ* had Baptized the Law, and *Gospelized* both by preaching it as a rule of holiness in his Sermons, *Mat.* 5. 27. and by walking in his life by the rule of it, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21, 22. That principle therefore may be indicted for a murderer of a righteous and holy life, which takes away the rule by which it should be led. This is a subtle way indeed of Satan to surprize the poor creature; if he make the Christian traveller weary of his guide, and once send him away, then it will not be long before he will wander out of heaven-way, and fall into hell-roads. The Apostle tells us of a generation of men, who while they promise themselves liberty, are themselves servants of corruption, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. Truly these methinks look like the men, who slip off the yoke of the command under a pretence of liberty, that soon have a worse yoke on in its room, even the yoke of sin.

Secondly, Take heed thou walkest not by a false rule. There is but one true rule, the Word of God, and therefore we may soon know which is a false. *Isaiah* 8. 20. *To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.* Pretend not to more strictness than the world will vouch; this is to be over-righteous indeed, *Eccles.* 7. 16. Excess makes a monster, as well as defect; not only he that hath but one hand, but he that hath three, is one. There is a curse scored up for him that adds to, as well as for him that takes from the words of this Book, *Rev.* 22. 18. The Devil hath had of old a design to undermine Scriptural holiness, by crying up an *Apocryphal* holiness. He knows too well, that as the Pot by seething over, puts out the fire, and so comes in a while not to seeth at all; thus by making mens zeal to boyl over into a false pretended holiness, he is sure to quench all true holiness, and bring them at last to have no zeal, but prove Key-cold Atheists. The *Pharisee* he must seek out the commands of God with the traditions of men; the *Papist* (his true Son and Heir) hath his unwritten verities, holy orders and rules for a more austere life, than ever came into Gods heart to require; and of late the *Quakers* have borrowed many of their threads from both, with which they are very busie to patch up a ridiculous

kind of Religion, which a man cannot possibly take up, till he hath first fore-done his own understanding, and renounced all subjection to the Word of God. O beware of a will-holiness, and a will-ship, it is a heavy charge God puts in against *Israel*, *Hosea* 8. 14. *Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth Temples.* This may seem strange, forget God, and yet so devout as to build Temples? Yes, he built them without warrant from God; God counts himself forgot, when we forget his Word, and keep not close to that. It is laid at *Jeroboam's* door as a great sin, *That he offered upon the Altar which he made at Bethel, in the Month which he had devised in his heart,* 1 *King.* 12. 33. He took counsel of his own heart, not of God when and where to offer. A holiness which is the device of our hearts, is not the holiness after Gods heart; the curse that falls upon such bold men, is, that while they seek to establish a holiness of their own, they submit not to the true holiness God requires in his Word; God justly gives them over to real unholiness, for pretending to a further holiness, than they should: Witness those sinks and common shoals of all abominations (religious houses I mean, as they are called by the *Papists*) which being the institutions of men, for want of the salt of a Divine warrant to keep them sweet, have run into filthiness and corruption. God will not endure his creature should be a self-mover; it is a greater sin to do what we are not commanded, than not to do what we are commanded by God; as it is in a Subject to presume to make Laws of his own head, than not to obey the Law his Prince enacts; by setting up a holiness of our own, we take Gods Mint, as it were, out of his hand, to whom alone it belongs to stamp what is holy, and what not.

Thirdly, Use not the true rule partially; to be partial in practising, is as bad, as to be partial in handling of the Law; this made the Priests contemptible, *Mal.* 2. 9. and so will that, the Professour to God and man; square the whole frame of thy life by rule, or all is to no purpose. *Divers measures are an abomination to the Lord,* *Prov.* 20. 10. He is the honest man in his dealings with men, that hath but one measure (and that according to the Law) which he useth in his trade. And he is the holy man, that useth but one rule for all his actions, and that no other than the Word of God. O how fulsome was the *Jews* hypocrisy to Gods stomach, that durst not goe into the Judgement-hall, for fear of rendering themselves unclean? *Joh.* 18. but made no scruple of embruing their hands in Christs blood; and the *Pharisees*, who observed the rule of the Law strictly, in *tything annise and Cummin*, but dispensed with themselves in the weightier matters of the Law: O beware of this as thou lovest thy souls life: you would not thank that customer who comes into your shop, and buyes a penny-worth of you, but steals from you what is worth a pound, or him that is very punctual in paying a small debt he owes, only that he may get deeper into your book, and at last cheat you of a greater sum. This is horrid wickedness to comply with the Word in little matters, on a design that you may covertly wrong God in greater.

S E C T.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Propound a right end to thy self in thy righteous holy walking, and here be sure thou standst clear off a legal end, do not think by thy righteousness to purchase any thing at God's hand. Heaven stands not upon sale to any. *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6.* What God sold to Christ, he gives to us. Christ was the Purchaser, Believers are but Heirs to what he hath bought, and must claim nothing but in his right; by claiming anything of God for our righteousness, we shut our selves out from having any benefit of his; we cannot be in two places at the same time; if we be found leaning on our own house, we cannot also be found in Christ; *Paul* knew this, and therefore renounceth the one, that he may be entitled to the other, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* It is Satan's Policy to crack the Breast-plate of thy own righteousness, by beating it out further than the metal will bear; Indeed by trusting in it, thou destroyest the very nature of it; thy righteousness becomes unrighteousness, and thy holiness degenerates into wickedness; What greater impiety than Pride? such a Pride as rants it over Christ, and alters the method which God himself hath set for saving souls? O Soul, if thou wouldst be holy, learn to be humble. They are clasp'd together, *Mic. 6. 8.* *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!* And how he that trusts in his own holiness, should be said to walk humbly, it cannot enter into our heart to conceive. God sets not thee to earn Heaven by thy holiness, but thereby to shew thy love and thankfulness to Christ that hath earned it for thee. Hence the great Argument Christ useth to provoke his Disciples to holiness, is Love, *If ye love me keep my Commandments, Joh. 14.* As if he had said, You know what I came into the World, and am now going out of the World for; both upon your service, for whom I lay down my life, and take it up again, that I may live in Heaven to intercede for you; if these, and the blessed fruits you reap from these, be valued by you, love me; and if ye love me, testify it in keeping my Commandments. That is Gospel holiness which is bred and fed by this love, when all the Christian doth, is by him offered up as a thanksgiving sacrifice to Christ, *that loved us to death.* Thus the Spouse to Christ, *Cant. 7. 12.* *I will give thee my loves, what she means by her loves, she expresseth, vers. 13.* *All manner of precious fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved.* In vers. 18. she had professed her faith on Christ, and drank deep of his love, and now to rebound his love in thankfulness, she bestirs herself to entertain him with the pleasant fruits of his own graces, as gathered from a holy conversation, which she doth not lay up to feed her pride, and self-confidence with; but reserves them for her Beloved, that he may have the entire praise of them.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Often look on the perfect pattern which Christ in his holy example hath given thee for a holy life. Our hand will be as the Copy is we write after; if we set low examples before us, it cannot be expected we should rise high our selves; and indeed the holiest Saint on earth is too low to be our pattern, because perfection in holiness must be aimed at by the weakest Christian, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* and that is not to be found in the best of Saints in this lower World. *Moses* the meekest man on earth, at a time his spirit is ruffled; and *Peter* the fore-man of the Apostles, doth not alwaies *aggravate*, *foot it right*, according to the Gospel, *Gal. 2. 14.* And he that would follow him then, is sure to go out of his way. The good Souldier follows his File-leader, not when he runs away, but when he marches after his Captain orderly, *1 Cor. 11. 1.* *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.* The Comment must be followed no further than it agrees with the Text. The Master doth not only rule the Scholars book for him, but writes him a Copy with his own hand. Christ's command is our rule, his life our Copy; if thou wilt walk holily, thou must not only endeavour to do what Christ commands, but as Christ himself did it; thou must labour to shape every letter in thy Copy, action in life, in a holy imitation of Christ. By holiness we are the very Image of Christ, *Rom. 8. 29.* We present Christ, and hold him forth to all that see us. Now two things go to make a thing the Image of another. First, Likeness. Secondly, Derivation. It must not only be like it, but this likeness must be deduced, and derived from it; Snow and Milk are both white alike, yet we cannot say, that they are the Image one of another, because that likeness they have is not derived either from other. But the Picture which is drawn every line by the face of a man, this may properly be call'd the Image of that man, after whose likeness it is made. Thus true holiness is that which is derived from Christ, when the Soul sets Christ in his Word, and Christ in his example before him, (as one would the person, whose Picture he intends to draw) and labours to draw every line in his life by these. O this is a sweet way indeed to maintain the power of holiness! When thou art tempted to any vanity, set Christ before thy eye in his holy walking; Ask thy Soul, am I in this speech, action, company I comfort with, like Christ? Did he, or would he, if again to live on earth, do as I do? Would not he be more choice of his words than I am? Did ever such a vain speech drop from his lips? Would he delight in such company as I do? Spend his time upon such trifles and impertinencies as I do? Would he bestow so much cost in pampering of his body, and swallow down his throat at one meal, what would feed many poor creatures ready to starve for want? Would he be in every fashion that comes up, though never so ridiculous and offensive? Should Cards and Dice ever have been found in his hands to drive time away? And shall I indulge my self in any thing that would make me unlike Christ? God forbid. We think it enough, if

we can quote such a good man or great professor to countenance our practice, and so are led into temptation. But Christian, if thy conscience tells thee Christ likes not such doings, away with them, though thou couldst produce the example of the eminentest Saint in the Country to favour them. Thou knowest some possibly of great name for profession, that have cast off duties in their families; but did not Christ shew an especial care of the Apostles which lived under him, and were of his Family? often praying with them, repeating to them, and further opening what he preach'd in publick, keeping the Passover with them (as his household) according to the Law of that Ordinance, *Exod. 16*. Thou seest some turn their back on the publick assemblies under a pretence of sinful mixtures there that would defile them: Did our Lord Jesus do thus? was not he in the Temple, and in the Synagogues, holding communion with them in the service of God which was for the substance there preserved, though not without some corruptions crept in amongst them? O Christian, study Christ's life more, and thou wilt soon learn to mend thy own. *Summa Religionis est imitari quem colis*. It is the very summe and top of Religion to be as like the God we Worship as may be.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Walk dependently on God. The Vine is fruitful so long as it hath a Pole, or Wall to run upon, but without such a help it would soon be trod under-foot, and come to nothing; *It is not in man to direct his own way; Multa bona facit Deus in homine, qua non facit homo; nulla vero facit homo, qua non facit Deus ut faciat*, Augustinus: There are many good things that God doth in man, which man hath no hand in; but there is no good and holy action that a man does, but God does enable him to do it: As was said of that *Grecian Captain*, *Parmenio did many exploits without Alexander, but Alexander nothing without Parmenio*. If thou wilt therefore maintain holiness in its power, acknowledge God in all thy waies, and lean not to thine own understanding, *Prov. 3. 5, 6*. He is ready to help them that engage him, but counts himself charg'd with the care of none but such as depend on him. The Christians way to Heaven is something like that in our Nation, (called the *Washes*) where the sands (by reason of the Seas daily overflowing) do so alter, that the traveller who past them safely a month ago, cannot without great danger venture again, except he hath his guide with him; where then he found firm Land, possibly a little after, coming he may meet with a devouring quick-sand. Truly thus the Christian who gets over a duty at one time with some facility, his way smooth and plain before him, at another time may find a temptation in the same duty enough to set him, if he had not help from Heaven to carry him safe out of the danger. O Christian, it is not safe for thee to venture one step without thy stay, thy hand of faith leaning on thy beloved's arm: Trust to thy own legs and thou fallest; use thy legs, but trust to his arm, and thou art safe.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, Look to thy company, who they are thou conforrest with; flee unholy company, as baneful to the power of godliness; be but as careful for thy soul, as thou wouldst for thy body; durst thou drink in the same cup, or sit in the same chair with one that hath an infectious disease? And is not sin as catching a disease as the Plague it self? Darest thou come where such ill scents are to be taken, as may soon infect thy soul? Of all Trades it would not do well to have the *Collier* and *Fuller* live together; what one cleanseth, the other will crock and smutch. Thou canst not be long among unholy ones, but thou wilt hazard the defiling of thy soul, which the holy Spirit hath made pure: and he did not wash thee clean, to run where thou shouldst be made foul; to be sure thou shalt have no help from them to advance thy holiness; and truly we would not choose that Society where we may not hope to make them, or be made our selves better by them. 'Tis observable what the Spirit of God notes concerning *Abraham*, *Heb. 11. 9*. *He sojourned in the Land of Promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same Promise*. He is not said to dwell with the Natives of that Land, but with *Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same Promise with him*. *Abraham* did not seek acquaintance with the Heathen; no, he was willing to continue a stranger to them, but he liv'd with those that were of his own family, and God's family also. Christians are a company of themselves, *Act. 4. 23*. *Being let go, they went to their own company; who should Believers join themselves to, but Believers?* as *Paul* said, *Have you not a wise man among you, but you must go to Law before Unbelievers?* so, may I say to thee Christian, is there never a Saint in all the Town that thou canst be acquainted with, and discourse with, but you must join with the prophane and ungodly, amongst whom you live! no wonder thy holiness thrives no better, when thou breathest in wicked company, that is like the East-wind, under which nothing grows and prospers.

SECT. VII.

Seventhly, Get some Christian friend (whom thou maist trust above others) to be thy faithful Monitor. O that man hath a great help, for the maintaining the power of godliness, that has an open-hearted friend, that dare speak his heart to him. A stander-by sees more sometimes by a man, than the Actor can do by himself, and is more fit to judge of his actions than he of his own; sometimes self-love blinds us in our own cause, that we see not our own cause, that we see not our selves so bad as we are; and sometimes we are over-suspicious of the worst by our selves, which makes us appear to our selves worse than we are. Now that thou maist not deprive thy self of so great help from thy friend be sure to keep thy heart ready with meekness to receive, yea, with thankfulness embrace a
reproof

reproof from his mouth. Those that cannot bear plain-dealing, hurt themselves most; for by this they seldom hear the truth. He that hath not love enough to give a reproof seasonably to his brother, nor humility enough to bear a reproof from him, is not worthy to be called a Christian; By the first he shews himself a *hater of his Brother*, Lev. 19. 17. by the second, he proves himself a scorner, Prov. 9. Holy David professed he would take it as a kindness for the righteous to smite him, yea, as kindly as if he broke a Box of precious Oyl upon his head, which was amongst the *Jews* a high expression of love, Psal. 141. 5. And he made his word good; he did not (as the *Papists* do by their *holy-water*) commend it highly, but turn away his face, when it comes to be sprinkled on him. No, *Abigail* and *Nathan* who reproved him, one for his bloody intentions against *Nabal* and his family; the other for his bloody fact upon *Uriah*, they both sped well in their errand. The first prevented the fact intended by her seasonable reproof; the second recovered him out of that dismal sin of murder, wherein he had lain some Months without coming so far to himself as to repent of it, for ought that we read; and which is observable, they did not only prevail in the business, but endeared themselves by this their faithfulness to his Soul, so unto him, that he takes her to be his wife, and him to be of his most Privy Council to his dying-day, 1 King. 1. 27, 32. Truly it is one great reason, why the falls of professors are so frequent in our daies, and their recoveries so rare or late; because few in these unloving times are to be found so faithful, as to do this Christian-office of reproof to their Brethren; they will sooner go, and tattle of it to others to their disgrace, than speak of it to themselves for their recovery. Indeed by telling others, we obstruct our way from telling the person himself, with any hope of doing him good. It will be hard to make him believe thou comest to heal his soul, who hast already wounded his name.

SECT. VIII.

Eightly, Be often seriously thinking how holily and righteously, you will in a dying-hour wish you had lived. They who now think it matters not much, what language drivels from them, what company they walk in, what they busie their time about, how they comport with God in his Worship, and with man in their dealings, but live at large, and care not much which end goes formost; yea, wonder at the niceness and zeal of others, as if there were no pace would carry them to Heaven but the gallop; when once death comes so near as to be known by its own grim face, and not the report of others, when these poor creatures see they must in earnest into another world without any delay, and their naked souls must return to God that gave them, to hear what interpretation he will put upon the course and tenour of their walking, and accordingly to pass an irrevocable sentence of life or death upon them; now their thoughts will begin to change, and take up other notions of a righteous and holy

life than ever they had before. 'Tis observed among the *Papists*, that many *Cardinals*, and other great ones, who would think their *Cowle* and religious habit ill become them in their health, yet are very ambitious to die, and be buried in them, as commonly they are. Though this be a foppery in itself, yet it helps us to a notion considerable. They who live wickedly and loosely, yet like a religious habit very well, when to go into another World. As that young Gallant said to his swaggering companion, (after they had visited *Ambrose* lying on his dying-bed, and saw how comfortably he lay triumphing over death now approaching;) *O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose!* vain wish! wouldst thou O man, not reap what thou sowest, and find what thou layest up with thy own hands? dost thou sow Cockle, and wouldst reap Wheat; dost thou fill thy chest with dirt, and expectst to find Gold when thou openest it? cheat and gull thy self thou maist, but thou canst not mock God, who will pay thee in the same coyn at thy death, which thou treasurest up in thy life. There are few so horribly wicked, but the thoughts of death awe them; they dare not fall upon their wicked practices, till they have got some distance from the thoughts of this. Christian, walk in the company of it every day by serious meditation, and tell me at the weeks end, whether it doth not keep worse company from thee.

SECT. IX.

Ninthly, Improve the Covenant of grace for thy assistance in thy holy course. *Moses* himself had his holiness not from the *Law*, but *Gospel*. Those heroic acts, for which he is recorded as one so eminently holy, they are all attributed to his faith, Heb. 11. 24, 25. By Faith *Moses* did this, and by Faith that, to shew from whence he had his strength; now the better to improve the Covenant of Grace for this purpose, consider these three particulars.

First, That God in the Covenant of grace hath promised to furnish and enable his children for a holy life, Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes.* This is a way that God hath by himself. The mother can take her child by the hand to lead it, but not put strength into his feeble joynts, to make him go. The Prince can give his Captains a Commission to fight, but not courage to fight. There is a power goes with the Promise; hence it is they are called *exceeding great and precious promises*, (because given for this very end) that by these we might be made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. and therefore we are not only prest to holiness from the command, but especially from the promise, 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, (he means to help and encourage us) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* 'Tis good travelling in his company, that promiseth to pay our charges all the way; good working for him that promiseth to work all our work for us, Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Secondly, God hath laid up in Christ a rich and full

full treasure of grace to supply thy wants continually, Col. 1. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* Fulness, all fulness, all fulness dwelling; not the fulness of a land-flood, up and down, not the fulness of a vessel, to serve his own turn only; but of a fountain that lends its streams to others without streightning or lessening its own store. Indeed 'tis a fulness purposely Ministerial, as the Sun hath not its light for its self, but for the lower world, called therefore *now*, because it is the great Minister and servant to hold forth light to the world. Thus Christ is the Sun of righteousness, diffusing his grace into the bosomes of his people. Grace is said to be *poured into his lips*, to let us know he hath it, not to keep to himself, but to impart *that of his fulness we may receive grace for grace.*

Thirdly, Every child of God hath not only a right to this fulness in Christ, but an inward principle (which is Faith) whereby he is by the instinct of the new creature taught to suck and draw grace from Christ, as the child doth nourishment in the womb, by the navel-string from the mother; and therefore poor soul, if thou would'st be more holy, believe more, suck more from Christ. Holy David, Psal. 116. affected with the thoughts of Gods gracious providence, in delivering him out of his deeper distress, takes up (as the best messenger he

could send his thanks to heaven by) a strong resolution for a holy life; *vers. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*; he would spend his dayes now in Gods service; but lest we should think he was rash, and self-confident, he addes *vers. 10. I believed, therefore have I spoken.* First, he acted his faith on God for his strength, and then he promiseth what he will do. Indeed the Christian is a very beggarly creature considered in himself; he is not ashamed to confess it; what he promiseth to expend in any holy duty, is upon the credit of his Saviours purse, who he humbly believes, will bear him out in it with assisting grace.

S E C T. X.

Tenthly, Fortifie thy self against those discouragements by which Satan, if possible, will divert thee from thy purpose, and make thee lay aside this Breast-plate of righteousness and holiness as cumbersome, yea, prejudicial to thy carnal interests: Now the better to arme thee against his assaults of this kind, I shall instance two or three great objections whereby he scares many from this holy walking, and also lend a little help to wrest these weapons out of thy enemies hand, by preparing an answer to them against he comes.

CHAP. XII.

wherein the first policy or stratagem of Satan is defeated, which he useth to make the Christian throw away his Breast-plate of Righteousness, as that which hinders the pleasure of his life.

Assault 1. **F**irst, Satan labours to picture a holy righteous life with such an austere, frow face, that the creature may be out of love with it. O faith he, if you mean to be thus precise and holy, then bid adieu to all joy; you at once deprive your selves of all those pleasures which others pass their dayes so merrily in the embraces of, that are not so strait-laced in their consciences.

How true a charge this is, that Satan layes upon the wayes of holiness, we shall now see; and truly he that desires to see the true face of holiness in its native hue and colour, should do well not to trust Satan, or his own carnal heart to draw its picture. I shall deal with this Objection; First, by way of concession; there are some pleasures (if they may be so called) that are inconsistent with the power of holiness; whoever will take up a purpose to live righteously, he must shake hands with them, and they are of two sorts.

S E C T. I.

Answer 1. First, All such pleasures as are in themselves sinful; godliness will allow no such in thy embraces. And art thou not shrewdly hurt (dost think) to be denied that which would be thy bane to drink? would any think the father cruel, that

should charge his child, not to dare so much as take of any rats bane? truly I hope, you that have put under the renewing work of the Spirit, can call in by another name than pleasure. I am sure Saints in former times have not counted themselves tied up, but saved from such pleasures. The bondage is in serving them, and the liberty of being saved from them, *Ti. 3. 2.* The Apostle bewails the time, when himself and other Saints were *foolish, decaying, serving divers lusts and pleasures*; and he reckons it among the prime benefits they receiv'd by the grace of the Gospel, to be delivered from that vassalage, *vers. 5. But according to his mercy he saved us* (how? not by pardoning them only, but) *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost.* However the Devil makes poor creatures expect pleasure in sin, and promiseth them great matters of this kind; yet he goes against his conscience, and his own present sense also. He doth not find sin so pleasant a morsel to his own taste, that he should need to commend it upon this account to others: his pleasure is like the pleasure which a place in the *West-Indies* affords those that dwell in it; There grows in it most rare luscious fruit, but these dainties are so sawced with the intolerably scorching heat of the Sun by day, and the multitude of a sort of creature stinging them by night, that they

they can neither well eat by day nor sleep by night, to digest their sweet-meats; which made the *Spaniards* call the place *Comfus in hell*; and truly what are the pleasures of sin, but such *comfus in hell*? there is some carnal pleasure they have, which delights a rank sensual palate; but they are serv'd in with the fiery wrath of God, and stinging of a guilty restless conscience; and the fears of the one, with the anguish of the other, are able sure to melt and waste away that little joy and pleasure they bring to the sense.

Secondly, There are pleasures which are not in their own nature sinful; such are creature-comforts and delights: The sin lies, as to these, not in the using, but in the abusing of them, which is done two ways.

First, When a due measure is not kept in the use of them; he cannot live *holily* and *righteously* in this present world, that lives not soberly also. Godliness will allow thee to taste of these pleasures as sauce, but not feed on them as meat. The rich mens charge, *James* 5. 5. runs thus, *Ye have lived in pleasure on earth*; they lived in pleasures, as if they lived for them, and could not live without them; when once this wine of creature contents fumes up to the brain, intoxicates the mans judgement, that he begins to doat of them, and cannot think of parting with them to enjoy better, but cries loth to depart; as those *Jews* in *Babylon* who (beginning to thrive in that foyle) were very willing to stay there, and lay their bones in *Babylon* for all *Jerusalem*, which they were called to return unto; then truly they are pernicious to the power of holiness. Though a master doth not grutch his servant his meat and drink, yet he will not like it, if when he is to go abroad, his servant be laid up drunk, and disabled from waiting on him by his intemperance; and a drunken man is as fit to attend on his master, and do his business for him, as a Christian overcharged with the pleasures of the creature, is to serve his God in any duty of godliness.

Secondly, They are sinful when not rightly used; fruit eat out of its season is naught. We read of a *time to embrace, and a time to forbear*, *Eccles.* 3. 7. there are some seasons that the power of holiness calls off, and will not allow, what is lawful at another time. As first, on the Lords day, now all carnal creature-pleasures are out of season. God calls us then to higher delights, he expects we should lay the other aside and not put our palates out of taste with those lower pleasures, that we may the better relish his heavenly dainties, *Isa.* 58. 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own wayes, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words; then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord.* Mark, we can neither taste the sweetness of communion with God, nor pay the honour due to God in sanctifying his day, except we deny our selves in our carnal delights. If a King should at some certain times of the year invite some of his poor subjects to sit and feast with him at his own royal table, they should

exceedingly dishonour their Prince, and wrong themselves, to bring their ordinary mean fare with them to Court. Do glorified Saints in heaven call for any of their carnal delights, or miss them, while they are taken up in heaven praising God, and feeding on the joyes that flow from the full-eyed vision of God; and doth not God make account he gives you to enjoy heaven in a figure, when he admits you to the service of his holy day? Secondly, in days of solemn fasting and prayer, we are then to afflict our souls; and creature-pleasures will fit that work no better, than a silver lace would do a mourning suit. Thirdly, in times of publick calamity in the Church abroad, especially at home; and this a gracious heart cannot but count reasonable that he should deny himself, or at least tie up himself to a very short allowance in his creature-delights, when Christ in his Church lies a bleeding, sympathy is a debt we owe to our fellow Saints, Christ mystical. And truly the cords of others afflictions, will be little felt through our soft downy beds, if we indulge our selves (I mean) to a full enjoyment of our ease, and carnal delights. What child that is merry and pleasant in his own house, and hath a father or mother lying at the same time in great misery at the point of death, (but unknown to him) will not when the doleful news at last comes to him, change his note, yea, mourn that he did not know it sooner, and had not rather have been weeping for, and with his dear relations in the house of mourning, than passing away his time pleasantly at home? Hitherto I have answered by concession, confessing what pleasures the power of a holy and righteous life denies and forbids, and I hope they appear to be no other than such as may without any loss to the believers joy, be fairly dismissed.

SECT. II.

Pleasure of holiness.

Ans. Now in the second place I come to answer by way of negation; though a holy righteous life denies the Christian the pleasures fore-mentioned yet it doth not deprive him of any true pleasure the creature affords, yea, so far from this, that none doth or can enjoy the sweetness of the creature, like the gracious soul that walks in the power of holiness, as will appear in these two particulars.

First, The gracious person hath a more curious palate, that fits him to taste a further sweetness in, and so draw more pleasure from any creature enjoyment, than an unholy person can do. The bee finds no honey in the same flower from whence the Bee goes laden away; nor can an unholy heart taste that sweetness which the Saint doth in a creature; he hath indeed a natural fleshy palate, whereby he relisheth the gross carnal pleasure the creature affords, and that he makes his whole meal on; but a gracious heart tastes something more: All *Israel* drank of the rock, and that rock was Christ, *1 Cor.* 10. 4. But did all that tasted the waters natural sweetness, taste Christ in it? no alas, they were but a few holy souls that had a spiritual palate to do this. *Sampson's* father and mother ate of the honey out of the

the Lions carcass as well as *Sampson*, and may be lik'd the taste of it for honey as well as *Sampson*, yet he took more pleasure sure than they; he tasted the sweetness of Gods providence in it, that had delivered him from that very Lion that now affords him this honey, *Judg. 14.*

Secondly, The Christian has more true pleasure from the creature than the wicked, as it comes more refined to him than to the other. The unholy wretch sucks dregs and all; dregs of sin, and dregs of wrath, whereas the Christians cup is not thus spiced. First, dregs of sin; the more he hath of the creatures delights given him, the more he sins with them. O 'tis sad to think what work they make in his naughty heart; they are but fuel for his lusts to kindle upon; away they run with their enjoyments, as the prodigal with his bags, or like hogs in shaking-time, no light is to be had of them or thought of their return, as long as they can get any thing abroad, among the delights of the world. None so prodigiously wicked as those that are fed high with carnal pleasures. They are to the ungodly as the dung and ordure is to the swine, which grows fat by lying in it; so their hearts grow gross and fat, their consciences more stupid, and senseless in sin by them; whereas the comforts and delights that God gives in to a holy soul by the creature, turn to spiritual nourishment to his graces, and draw these forth into exercise, as they do the others lust. Secondly, dregs of wrath; the *Israelites* had little pleasure from their dainties, when the wrath of God fell upon them, before they could get them down their throats, *Psal. 78. 30.* The sinners feast is no sooner served in, but divine justice is preparing to send up a reckoning after it; and the fearful expectation of this, cannot but spoil the taste of the other. But the gracious soul is entertained upon free cost; no amazing thoughts need discompose his spirit, so as to break his draught, or make him spill any of the comfort of his present enjoyment from the fear of an approaching danger. All is well, the coast is clear, he may say with *David*, *I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord makest me dwell in safety*, *Psal. 4. v. last*; God will not; all beside cannot break his rest; As the Unicorn heals the waters by dipping his horn in them that all the beasts may drink without danger, so Christ hath healed creature-enjoyments, that there is no death now in the Saints cup.

SECT. III.

Ans. Thirdly, I answer by way of affirmation. The power of holiness is so far from depriving a man of the joy and pleasure of his life, that there are incomparable delights and pleasures peculiar to the holy life, which the gracious soul finds in the wayes of righteousness, enjoys by it self, and no stranger intermeddles with. They lie inward indeed, and therefore the world speaks so wildly and ignorantly concerning them. They will not believe they have such pleasures till they see them; and they shall never see them till they believe them. The *Roman* souldiers when they entered the Temple, and

went into the holy of holiest, seeing there no image, as they used to have in their own *Idolatrous Temples*, gave out in a jeer, that the *Jews* worship'd the clouds. Truly thus, because the pleasures of righteousness and holiness are not so gross, as to come under the cognizance of the worlds carnal senses, (as their brutish ones do) therefore they laugh at the Saints, as if their joy were but the child of fancy, and that they do but embrace the cloud instead of *Juno* her self, a phantastick pleasure for the true. But let such know that they carry in their own bosome, what will help them to think the pleasures of a holy life more real than thus. The horror (I mean) which the guilt of their unholy and unrighteous lives, does, sometimes, fill their amazed consciences with, though there be no whip on their back, and pain in their flesh, tells them that the peace which results from a good conscience, may as well fill the soul with sweet joy, when no carnal delights contribute to the same. There are three things considered in the nature of a holy righteous life, that are enough to demonstrate it to be the only pleasant life. It is a life from God; it is a life with God; it is the very life of God.

First it is a life from God, and therefore must needs be pleasant and joyous. Whatever God makes is good and pleasant in its kind. Now life is one of the choicest of Gods works, insomuch that the poorest, silliest gnat, or flie in this respect, exceeds the Sun in its meridian-glory. To every life God hath appointed a pleasure suitable to its kind. The beasts have a pleasure suitable to the life of beasts, and man much more to his. Now every creature (we know) enjoys the pleasure of its life best, when it is in its right temper; if a beast be sick, it droops and groans, and so does man also; no dainties, sports, or musick please a man that is ill in his health. Now holiness is the due temper of the soul, as health is of the body, and therefore a holy life must needs be a pleasant life. *Adam* (I hope) in Paradise, before sin spoil'd his temper, liv'd a pleasant life. When the creature is made holy, then he begins to return to his primitive temper, and with it to his primitive joy and pleasure. O sirs, men fall out with their outward conditions, and are discontented at their rank and place in the world; but the fault lies more inward; The shooe is straight and good enough, but the foot is crooked that wears it; all would do well, if thou wert well; and thou wilt never be well, till thou art righteous and holy.

Secondly, It is a life with God; a gracious soul he walks in Gods presence, and keeps communion with him. If you would meet a Saint, you know his haunt, what company he keeps, *1 Joh. 1. 3. That ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* See the ingenuity of a holy soul; truly our fellowship is with God, we tell you no lie. An unholy heart dares not bethus free, (I warrant you) and tell what company his soul walks with from day to day. We see there's no danger of going among holy men; they will bring you acquainted with no ill company; they'll carry you to God where their great

great resort lies. And tell me now, must not that man live a pleasant life, that walks with God? Let it be but a man you ride with in a journey, one that loves you well, and is able to entertain you with good and cheerful discourse; doth not the delight you take in his company, strangely, yet sweetly beguile you of the tediousness of the way? O what joy must then God bring with him, to that soul he walks with? *Blessed is the people (saith the Psalmist) that know that joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy Name shall they rejoice all the day.* The sound of the trumpet, which called them to their religious assemblies, is called *the joyful sound*, because in his worship, God did especially manifest himself to his people. The heaven of heavens is to be where the Lord is; surely then, that which the Saint hath of God's presence here, is enough to make the Christians life joyous. O Christians, is it not sweet to walk with God, to God? To walk with God here below, by his assisting, comforting presence, to God manifesting himself in all his glory above in heaven? O all you that are for pleasant prospects in your walks, and out of your windows, see here one that the world cannot match; The prospect that a gracious soul hath, walking in the paths of righteousness, he may see God walking with him, as a friend with his friend, and manifesting himself to him, *Psal. 50. v. last*; yea, he hath not only the sweetness of Gods present company with him, but he hath the goodly prospect of heaven before him, whither God is leading him, and in this way of holiness will certainly bring him at last. Whereas the unholy wretch, walking in the company of his lusts, though they sweeten his mouth with a little frothy pleasure at present (that soon is melted off his tongue, and the taste forgot) yet they shew him the region of darkness before him, whither they will bring him, and where they will leave him, to repent of his dear-bought pleasures in torments endless and endless.

Thirdly, It is the life of God himself. Read the expression, *Ephes. 4. 18. alienated from the life of God.* That is, the life of godliness; a holy life is the life of God, but how? not only as God is the Author of it, so he is of the beasts life; thus the wicked are not alienated from the life of God, for they have a natural life which God gave them. But the expression carries more in it; and that is this; *The life of God, is as much, as a life like the life*

which God himself drives. He is a living God, and his life is a holy life; holiness is the life of his life. Now, I pray friends do you not think God himself lives a life of pleasure? and what is the pleasure of his life but holiness? He takes pleasure in the graces of his Saints, *Psal. 149. 4.* how much more in his own essential holiness, from whence those beams, which shine so beautifully to his eye in his children, were at first shot? Thou (whoever thou beest) hast an art above God himself, if thou canst fetch any true pleasure out of unholiness, and unrighteousness; and let me tell thee also, it is not the lowest of blasphemies, for thee to charge the way of righteousness and holiness, to be an enemy to true pleasure; for in that thou chargest God himself to want true joy and pleasure, who has no pleasure, if holiness will not yield it. But away with such putrid stuff as this is. The Devils and damned souls themselves, that hate God with the most perfect hatred of any other, yet they dare not say, they cannot say so. They know God to be glorious and happy, yea, *glorious in holiness*; and the creatures blifs and glory to consist in a participation of that holiness, which makes God himself so blessed and glorious. This, Christian, is the utmost that can be said of thy happiness, either here, or in heaven hereafter. That makes thee glorious, which makes God glorious; Thy joy and pleasure is of the same kind, with the pleasure God delights himself in. *Psal. 36. 8. Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* Mark that phrase, *the river of thy pleasures.* God hath his pleasures, and God gives his Saints drink of his pleasures. This is the sweet accent of the Saints pleasures. When a Prince bids his servants carry such a man down into the Cellar, and let him drink of their beer or wine, this is a kindness from so great a personage to be valued highly. But for the Prince to set him at his own table, and let him drink of his own wine, this I hope is far more. When God gives a man estate, corn, and wine, and oyl, the comforts of the creature, he entertains the man but in the common Cellar; such as have none but carnal enjoyments, they do but sit with the servants, and in some sensual pleasures, they are but fellow-commoners with the beasts. But when he bestows his grace, beautifies a soul with holiness, now he prefers the creature the highest it is capable of, he never sends this rich cloathing to any, but he means to set such by him, at his own table with him, in heavens glory.

CHAP. XIII.

wherein is defeated Satan's second wile, by which he would cheat the Christian of his Breast-plate, presenting it as prejudicial to his worldly profits.

Assault 2. Secondly, If thou doest not stumble at this stone, the Devil hath another at hand to throw in the way. He is not so unskilful a fowler, as to go with one single shot into the field,

and therefore expect him, as soon as he hath discharged one, and mist thee, to let lie at thee with a second; and tell thee, this holy life, and righteous walking, thou had'st best never meddle with it,

O O except

except thou meanest to undo thy self, and all that depend on thee. Look upon the rich (will he say) and great men in the world; how dost thou think these heapt together such vast estates, and raised their families to such dignity and grandeur in their places? was it by their righteousness and holiness? alas! if they had been so strait-laced in their consciences, as thou must be (if thou tiest thy self up to the rules of a holy life) they had never come to so good a market for this world as they have done; and if thou wilt thrive with them, thou must do as they have done, throw off the *breast-plate of righteousness* quite, or unbuckle it, that it may hang loose enough, to turn aside when an advantage is offered, or else you may shut up your shop-windows, and give over your trade, for all you are like to get at the years end.

Answer. To defend thee (Christian) against this Assault, take these few considerations, from which it will not be hard to draw an answer, that will stop the mouth of this objection.

First, Consider it is not necessary that thou should'st be rich; but it is necessary thou should'st be holy, if thou meanest to be happy. You may travel to heaven with never a penny in your purse, but not without holiness in your heart and life also. And wisdom bids thee first attend to that which is of greatest necessity.

Secondly, Heaven is worth the having, though thou goest poor and ragged, yea, naked thither. There are some in the world, that will accept Gods offer thankfully, may they be admitted into that glorious City, though God doth not bribe them, and toll them along thither with great estates here. And therefore for shame resolve to be holy at all peradventures. Do not stand indenting with God for that, which if you were actually posselt of, and loved him, you would leave, and throw at your heels with scorn, rather than part with him.

Thirdly, A little of the world will give thee content, if holiness be kept in its power, as few cloaths will serve a hail-strong man; and better is the warmth that comes from blood and spirits within, than a load of cloaths without. Better, I trow, the content which godliness gives the Christian in his poverty, than the content (if there be such a thing in the world) which the rich man hath from his wealth. *Godliness with content is great gain.* The holy person is the only contented man in the world. Paul tells us, *He had learnt in whatsoever state he was to be content,* Phil. 4. 11. but if you ask him, who was his master, that taught him this hard lesson, he'll tell you, he had it not by sitting at Gamaliel's feet, but Christs, *vers. 13. I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.* What the Philosopher said in a brag, that the holy soul in truth and soberness can say through Christ, when he is lowest and poorest, that his heart and his condition are matches. We would count him a happy man, *filio mundi*, that can live of himself without trading or borrowing, or that when he would buy or purchase, hath ready cash for the purpose in his coffers, when he would indulge his fanciful appetite with varieties, hath all within his own pale, what

rarities the several elements can afford, and needs not to send abroad to this market and that for provision. Godliness is so rich a continent, that it is able to maintain the Christian of its own growth as I may say, and out of its own store, with all that his gracious heart can desire, without begging at the creatures door, and hazarding unworthily his holiness to attain.

Fourthly, Consider what a dear bargain they have, who part with, or pawn their *breast-plate of righteousness* for the worlds riches; which will appear, first in the sin; secondly, in the heavy curse that treads upon the heels of that sin.

First, It is a great sin, the Devil sure would tempt Christ to no small sin; we find him, *Luke 4.* laying this golden bait before him, when he *shew'd him all the Kingdoms of the world*, and promised them all unto him, if he would *fall down and worship him*. What was the foul spirits design in this demand, but to draw Christ to acknowledge him the Lord of the world, and by worshipping him, to declare that he expected the good things of the world, not from God, but him? Now truly, every one that by unrighteousness seeks the worlds pelf, he goes to the Devil for it, (and doth worship him in effect.) He had as good speak out, and say he acknowledges not God, but the Devil to be Lord of the world, and to have the disposing of it; for he doth, what God interprets so. Now, how much better is it, to have poverty from God, than riches from the Devil? Here is a daring sin with a witness, at one clap to take away Gods Sovereignty, and bestow it upon the Devil, to do what he please with the world.

Secondly, It is a foolish sin, *1 Tim. 6. 9.* *They that will be rich (that is, by right or wrong) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish lusts.* What greater folly, than to play the thief to acquire that which is a mans own already? if thou best a Saint, all is thine the world hath, *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8.* If riches be good for thee, thou shalt have it, for that is the tenour of temporal promises, and if it be not thought good by God (who is best able to judge) to pay thee the promise *in specie*, in kind, then another promise comes in for thy relief, which assures thee thou shalt have money-worth, *Heb. 13. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* If God hath given thee riches, but calls thee to part with it for his Names sake, then he gives thee his bond upon which thou mayest recover thy loss, with a hundred-fold advantage in this life, besides eternal life in the world to come, *Mat. 19. 29.* And he is a fool with a witness, that parts with Gods promises, for any security the Devil can give him.

Thirdly, Unrighteous gain will appear to be a dear bargain, from the heavy curse that cleaves unto it. *The curse of God is in the house of the wicked, Prov. 3. 33. But in the house of the righteous there is much treasure, Prov. 15. 6.* you may come to the righteous man, and find (possibly) no money in his house, but you are sure to find a treasure; whereas

whereas there is no treasure in the wicked mans house, when much gold and silver is to be found, because the curse of God eats up all his gains. Gods fork follows the wickeds rake. It is most righteous for him to scatter, what such gather by unrighteousness. They are said therefore, to consult shame to their house, for the stone out of the wall shall cry, and the beam out of the house shall answer it, Hab. 2. 10. O, who, that prizeth the comfort of his life, would, though for tuns of gold, live in a house thus haunted? Where the cry of his unrighteousness follows him into every room he goes, and he doth, as it were, hear the stones and beams of his house groaning under the weight of his sin, that laid them there; yea, so hateful is this sin to the righteous Lord, that not only they who purse up the gain thus got, are

curfed by him, but also the Instruments such use to advance their unrighteous projects. The poor Servant, that to carry favour with his Master, advanceth his estate by fraud and unrighteousness, God threatens to pay him his wages, *Zephany 1. 9. I will punish those that leap on the threshold, which fill their Masters houses with violence and deceit.* This is spoke either of Servants standing at the door to hook in customers they may cheat; or else of great mens Officers that came with absolute power into mens houses to take by violence from them what they pleased; These, though their Masters pocketed up the gain, shall be punished; Their Masters, as the great devourers, and they as their Sharks to seek and provide prey for them.

CHAP. XIV.

wherein is defeated the third stratagem Satan useth to disarm the Christian of his Breast-plate, and that is by scaring him with the contradiction, opposition and fend from the world it brings.

Affault 3. **T**Hirdly, There is yet a third stumbling-block, which Satan useth to lay in the way of a Soul setting forth in this path of righteousness; and that is the contradiction which such a one is sure to meet with from the World. O faith Satan, this is the ready way to bring thee under the lash of every tongue, to lose the love of thy Neighbours, and contract the scorn, yea, hatred of all thou livest among; and dost thou not desire to live friendly and peaceably with thy Neighbours? Canst thou bear to be hooted at, as *Lot* was among the *Sodomites*, and *Noah* amidst the old World, that were all of another way? This holiness breeds ill blood where-ever it comes, own that, and you bring the Worlds fists about your ears presently.

Ans. Truly though this be a sorry weak Objection in it self, yet where it meets with a soft temper; and disposition tendered with a facility of nature, one in whom love and peaceful inclinations are predominant, it carries weight enough to amount to a dangerous temptation. No doubt *Aaron* stumbled at this stone in the business of the golden calf. He did not please himself (surely) in the thing; but it was an act meerly complacentiat to the people, as appears by his Apology to *Moses*, *Exod. 32. 22. Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.* As if he had said, I did not know what they would have done to me upon my denial; what I did was to pacifie them, and prevent more trouble from them. There is need we see to be arm'd against this temptation, which that thou mayest be, seriously weigh these two Particulars.

First, Thy God (Christian) whom thou servest commands the tongues, hands, yea, hearts of all men. He can, when he pleases (without the least abating in thy holy course) give thee to find favour in the eyes of those thou most fearest, *Prov. 16. 7. When a mans ways please the Lord, he maketh even*

his enemies to be at peace with him. *Laban* in a fury pursues *Jacob*, but God meets him in the way, and gives him his lesson, how he should carry himself to the good man, *Gen. 31. 24. and ver. 29. he doth ingenuously confess to Jacob, what turn'd the wind into a warmer corner, and made him so calm with him, that set out so full of rage, ver. 29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the God of your Father met me yesternight, &c.* Thank him for nothing; He had power to hurt *Jacob*, but God would not let him. *Mordecai*, one would have thought, took the readiest way to incur the Kings wrath, by denying *Haman* that reverence which all were by Royal Command to pay him; but the holy mans conscience would not suffer his knee to bow; and yet we see when that proud favourite had done his worst to be reveng'd on him, he was forced himself to inherit the gallows, intended for *Mordecai*, and leave *Mordecai* to succeed him in the Princes favour. Thus God, who hath a Key to Kings breasts, on a sudden lock'd *Ahashuerus*'s heart against that cursed *Amalekite*, and opened it to let this holy man into his room. O who would be afraid to be conscientious, when God can and doth so admirably provide for his peoples safety, while they keep close to him.

Secondly, Suppose thy holy walking stirs up the wrath of ungodly ones against thee; Know, there may be more mercy in their hatred, than in their love. Commonly the Saints get good by the wrath of the wicked against them, not so oft by their favour and friendship; Their displeasure weakens their care, and makes them more accurate; Thus *David* prayed. God to make his way plain for him, because of his observing enemies; whereas their friendship too oft lays it asleep, and proves a snare to draw them into some sinful compliance with them. *Jehoshaphat* was wound in too far by his correspondence with *Ahab*; so hard is it to keep in with God, and wicked

men also. *Luther* protest he would not have *Erasmus* his honour for a world; indeed the friendship he had with, and respect he had from the great ones of the world, made him mealy-mouthed in the cause of God. The *Mobabites* could not give *Israel* the fall at arms-length, but when they closed in alliances with the children of *Israel*, then they were too hard for them; not their curses, but their embraces did them the hurt. Again, we can never lose the love, or incur the wrath of men; upon better, and more advantageous terms, than for keeping our breast-plate of righteousness close to us. First, when we lose for this any love from men, we gain Gods blessing instead of it. *Blessed are ye when all men speak evil of you falsely, for my Names sake, Matth. 5. 11.* Gods blessing is a good roof over our head, to defend us from the storm of mans wrath. O 'tis sad, when a Christian opens the mouths of the wicked, by some unholy action to speak evil of him; no promise will open then its door to hide thee from the storm of their railing tongues; Man reviles, and God frowns; little welcome such a one has, when he returns home to look into his own conscience, or converse with his God; but when 'tis for thy holiness they hate thee, God is bound by promise to pay thee love for their hatred, blessing for their cursing; and truly that Courtier has little cause to complain, that for a little dis-respect from others, that cannot hurt him, is advanced higher in his Princes favour. Secondly, while thy holy walking loseth thee some love from the world, it gains thee the more reverence and honour. They that will not love thee because thou art holy, cannot chuse but fear and reverence thee at the same time, for what they hate thee. Let a Saint comply with the wicked, and remit a little of his holiness to correspond with them; he loses by the hand (as to his interest, I mean in them;) for by gaining a little false love, he loses that true honour, which in-

wardly their consciences paid to his holiness. A Christian walking in the power of holiness, is like *Sampson* in his strength; the wicked fear him; but when he shews an impotent spirit by any indecency in his course to his holy profession, then presently he is taken prisoner by them, and falls under both the lash of their tongue, and scorn of their hearts. They can now dance about such a one, and make him their *May-game*, whose holiness even now kept them in awe. It is not poverty, or the baseness of thy outward state in the World, will render thee contemptible, so long as thou keep'st thy breast-plate of righteousness on. There sits Majesty in the brow of holiness, though clad in rags. Righteous *David* commands reverence from wicked *Saul*. The King himself does this homage to his poor exiled subject, *1 Sam. 24. 17. He wept, and said to David, thou art more righteous than I;* Ay, this is as it should be, when carnal men are forced to acknowledge, that they are out-shone by the holy lives of Christians; O Christians, do some singular thing, what the best of your meekly civil neighbours cannot do, and you sit sure in the throne of their consciences, even when they throw you out of their hearts and affections; so long as the *Magicians* did something like the miracles *Moses* wrought, they thought themselves as good men as he; but when they were non-plumt in the plague of lice, and could not with all their Art produce the like, they acknowledged the finger of God to be in it, *Exod. 8. 16.* Do no more than carnal men do, and you stand but level with themselves in their opinions of you, yea, they think themselves better than you, because they equal you, who pretend to holiness more than they. It is expected, that every one in the calling he professeth, should more than a little exceed another that is not of that calling, which if he do not, he becomes contemptible.

CHAP. XV.

Contains two Uses of the point.

WE come to the Application, in which we shall be the shorter, having sprinkled something of this nature all along as we handled the Doctrinal part.

SECT. I.

Use 1. First, for Information in two particulars.

First, Are we thus to endeavour the maintaining of the power of holiness? Then sure, there is such a thing as Righteousness and Unrighteousness, Holiness and Sin that opposeth it; yet there is a generation of men that make these things to be meer fancies, as if all the existence they had, were in the melancholy imaginations of some poor-spirited timorous men, who dream of these things, and then

are scared with the bug-bears, that their own foolish thoughts represent to them. Hence some among us, have dared to make it their boast and glorying, that they have at last got from under the bondage of that tyrant Conscience; they can now do that which we call swearing, lying, yea, what not? without being bearded and checkt by an imperious Conscience; Yea, that there is no sin to any but him that thinks so. These are worse fools than he the *Psalmist* speaks of, *Psal. 14. 1.* he doth but say in his heart, there is no God; but these tell the world what fools they are, and cannot hide their shame. I do not mention these so much to confute them; That were to as little purpose, as to go prove there is a Sun shining in a clear day, because a mad frantick man denies it, but rather to affect your hearts with the abominations of the times, ye holy ones of God;

God; O how deep a-sleep were men, that the enemy could come and sow such tares as these amongst us! Perhaps they thought such poysonous seed would not grow in our soyl, that hath had so much labour and cost bestowed on it by Christs husbandmen; that such strong delusions would never go down with any that had been used to so pure a Gospel-diet; But alas, we see by woful experience, that as a plague when it hits into a City that stands in the purest air, oft rageth more than in another place; so when a spirit of delusion falls upon a people that have enjoy'd most of the Gospel, it grows most prodigious. It makes me even tremble to think what a place of nettles, *England* that hath so long continued (without wrong to any other Church Christ hath in the world) one of his fairest fruit-fullest garden-plots may at last become, when I see what weeds have sprung up in our days. I have heard that reverend and holy Master *Greenham* should say, he feared rather *Atheisme* than *Poperie* would be *England's* ruine. Had he lived in our dismal days, he would have had his fears much encreased. Were there ever more *Atheists* made and making in *England* since it was acquainted with the Gospel, than in the compass of a dozen years last past? I have reason to think there were not; when men shall fall so far from profession of the Gospel, and be so blinded, that they cannot know light from darkness, righteousness from unrighteousness, are they not far gone in *Atheisme*? This is not natural blindness; for the Heathen could tell when they did good and evil, and see holiness from sin, without Scripture-light to shew them, *Rom. 2. 14. 15.* no, this blindness is a plague of God fallen on them for rebelling against the light when they could see it. And if this plague should grow more common, which God forbid, woe then to *England*.

Secondly, If we be to maintain the power of holiness, then surely it's not impossible: God would not command what he doth not enable his own peculiar people to do; only here you must remember carefully the distinction premised in the opening of the Text, between a *Legal righteousness*, and an *Evangelical righteousness*. The latter of which is so far from being unattainable, that there is not a sincere Christian in the world, but is truly holy in this sense; that is, he doth truly desire, conscientiously endeavour (with some success of his endeavour through divine grace assisting) to walk according to the rule of Gods Word. I confess all Christs Scholars are not of the same form; all his children are not of the same stature and strength; some foot it more nimbly in the ways of holiness than other; yet not a Saint but is endued with a principle of life, that sets him at work for God, and to desire to do more than he is able. As the seed, though little in it self, yet hath in it virtually the bigness and height of a grown tree; towards which it is putting forth with more and more strength of nature as it grows; so in the very first principle of grace planted at conversion, there is perfection of grace contain'd in a sense, that is a disposition putting the creature forth in desires and endeavours

after that perfection to which God hath appointed him in Christ Jesus. And therefore Christian, when ever such thoughts of the impossibility of obtaining this holiness here on earth are suggested to thee; reject them as sent in from Satan, and that on a design to feed thy own distrustful humour (which he knows they will suit too well,) as the news of Giants and high walls that the Spies brought to the unbelieving *Israelites* did them; and all to weaken thy endeavours after holiness, which he knows will surely prove him a liar. Do but strongly resolve to be conscientious in thy endeavours with an eye upon the promise of help, and the work will go on thou needest not fear it; *For the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. 84. 11.* Mark that, *grace and glory*, that is, *grace unto glory*: he'll still be adding more grace to that thou hast, till thy grace on earth commenceth glory in heaven.

S E C T. II.

Use 2. Secondly, for Reproof of several sorts of persons.

First, All those who content themselves with their unholy state wherein they are; such is the state of every one by nature. These alas are so far from maintaining the power of holiness, that they are under the power of their lusts; They give law to them, and cut out all their work for them, which they bestow all their time to make up. And is not that a sad life (sirs) which is spent about such filthy beastly work as sin and unrighteousness is? well may the bond of iniquity, and the gall of bitterness be joyn'd together, *Aff. 8. 23.* The Apostle is thought to allude to *Deut. 29. 18.* where all sin and unrighteousness is called a root that beareth gall and wormwood. He that plants sin and unholiness, and then thinks to gain any other than bitter fruit for all his labour, pretends to a knowledge beyond God himself, who tells that the natural fruit which grows from this root, is *gall and wormwood*; who would look for musk in a dogs kennel? that thou mayest sooner find there, than any true sweetness and comfort in unholiness. The Devil may possibly for a time sophisticate with his cookery and art, this bitter morsel, so that thou shalt not have the natural taste of it upon thy palate: But, as *Abner* said to *Joab*, *2 Sam. 2. 26.* *knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* In hell all the sugar will be melted wherein this bitter pill was wrapt; then, if not before, thou wilt have the true relish of that which goes down now so sweetly. O how many are there now in hell cursing their feast and feast-maker too! Do you think it gives any ease to the damned to think what they had for their money? I mean what pleasures, profits, and carnal enjoyments they once had on earth, for which they now pay those unspeakable torments that are upon them, and shall continue for ever without any hope or help? No, it encreaseth their pain beyond all our conceit, that they should sell their precious souls so cheap, in a manner for a song, and lose heaven

heaven and blessedness, because they would not be holy, which now they learn too late, was it self (however they once thought otherwise) a great part of that blessedness, and now torments them to consider, they put it from them under the notion of a burden and a bondage. But alas, alas! how few thoughts do unholy wretches spend with themselves, in considering what is doing in another world? They see sinners die daily in the prosecution of their lusts, but do no more think what is become of them, (that they are in hell burning and roaring for their sin) than the fish in the river do think what is become of their fellows that were twicht up by their gills from them, even now with the Anglers hook, and cast into the seething-pot or frying-pan alive: No, as those silly creatures are ready still to nibble and bite at the same hook that struck their fellows; even so are men and women forward to catch at those baits still of sinful pleasures, and wages of unrighteousness, by which so many millions of Souls before them have been hookt into hell and damnation.

Secondly, Those who are as unholy as others, naked to Gods eye, and Satans malice; but to save their credit in the world, wear something like a Breast-plate, a counterfeit holiness, which does them this service for the present, they are thought to be what they are not, *verily they have their reward*, and a poor one it is; for the Lords sake consider what you do, and tremble at it; you do the Devil, Gods great enemy, double service, and God double disservice. As he that comes into the field, and brings deceitful arms with him; he draws his Princes expectation towards him, as one that would do some exploit for him, but means nothing so; yea, he hinders some others that would be faithful to his Prince in that place, where he a traytor now stands, such a one may do his Prince more mischief than many who cowardly stay at home, or rebelliously run over to the enemies side, and tell him plainly what they mean to do. O friends be serious, if you will trade for holiness, let it be for *true holiness*, as it is phrased, *Ephes. 4. 34. Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*; wherein two phrases are observable; it is called the *new man after God*, that is, according to the likeness of God; such a sculpture on the soul or image, is drawn after God, as the picture after the face of the man. Again, *true holiness*, or *holiness of truth*; either respecting the Word, which is the rule of holiness, and then it means a Scripture-holiness, not Pharisical and traditional; or else it respects the heart, which is the seat of truth or falsehood; true holiness in this sense is holiness and righteousness in the heart; there must be truth of holiness in the inner parts; many a mans beauty of holiness is but like the beauty of his body; skin-deep, all on the out-side. Rip the most beautiful body, and that which was so fair without, will be found within when open'd, to have little besides blood, filth, and stench; so this *counterfeit holiness* when unbowel'd, and inside exposed to view, will appear to have hid within it, nothing but abundance of spiritual impurities and abominations.

God (said Paul to the high Priest) *shall smite thee, thou whited wall*, Acts 23. 3. Thus say I to thee, O Hypocrite, God shall so smite thee thou whited wall, or rather painted Sepulchre, that thy paint without in thy profession, doth not now more dazle the eyes of others into admiration of thy sanctity, than thy rottenness within (which then shall appear without) will make thee abhorred and loathed of all that see thee.

Thirdly, Those who are so far from being holy themselves, that they mock and jeer others for being so. This *breast-plate of righteousness* is of so base an account with them, that they who wear it in their daily conversation, do make themselves no less ridiculous to them, than if they came forth in a fools coat, or were clad in a dress contrived on purpose to move laughter; when some wretch would set a Saint most at naught, and represent him as an object of greatest scorn; what is the language he wraps him up in? but there goes a holy brother, one of the pure ones. His very holiness is that which he thinks to disgrace him with. This shews a heart extremely wicked; there is a further degree of wickedness appears in mocking holiness in another, than harbouring unholiness in a mans own bosome. That man hath a great antipathy indeed against a dish of meat, who not only himself refuseth to eat of it, but cannot bear the sight of it on anothers trencher without vomiting. O how desperately wicked is that man, with whom the very scent and sight of holiness at such a distance works so strange an effect, as to make him cast up the gall and bitterness of his spirit against it? The Spirit of God bestows the *chair* upon this sort of sinners, and sets them above all their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*, Psal. 1. 1. The scorner here is set as Chair-man at the Council-table of sinners; some read the word for scornful, rhetorical mockers. There is indeed a devilish wit that some shew in their mocks at holiness, they take a kind of pride in polishing those darts, which they shoot against the Saints. The *Septuagint* read it, *the chair of pestilent ones*. Indeed as the Plague is the most mortal among diseases, so is a spirit of scorning among sinners: As few recover out of this sin, as any whatever besides. The Scripture speaks of this sort of sinners, as almost free among the dead; as little hope of doing them good for their souls, as of those for their bodies, who cannot keep the Physick administred to them, but presently cast it up before it hath any operation on them; and therefore we are even bid to save our physick, and not so much as bestow a reproof on them, lest we have it cast on our faces, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he bate thee*, Prov. 9. 7. All we can do, is to write, *Lord have mercy on them*, upon their door. I mean, rather pray for them, than speak to them. There hath of old been this sort of sinners mingled amongst the godly. A mocking *Ishmael* in Abraham's family, Gen. 21. 9. And observable it is, what interpretation the Spirit of God makes of his scornful carriage towards his brother, Gal. 4. 29.

At then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Pray mark, first, what was the ground of the quarrel; it was this, his brother was born after the Spirit; and this, he being born after the flesh, hated. Secondly, observe how the Spirit of God phraseth this his scornful carriage to his brother; it is called persecuting him.

To aggravate the evil of a scornful spirit, and a mocking tongue, which stands for so little a sin in the worlds account-book, (who count none persecutors, but those that draw blood, for Religion) God would have the jeerer and scoffer know among what sort of men he shall be ranked, and tried at Christs bar, no less sinners than persecutors: but this I conceive is not all; this mocking of holiness is called persecuting, because there is the seed of bloody persecution in it. They who are so free of their tongue to jeer, and shew their teeth in sneering at holiness, would fasten their teeth also on it if they had power to use their cheek-bone. Lastly, observe this was not barely the cross disposition of Ishmael's personal peevish and froward temper, so to abuse his brother, but it is laid as the charge of all wicked men; as he did persecute his brother, because after the Spirit, even so now; this mocking spirit runs in a blood; the whole litter are alike; and if any seem more ingenious and favourable to the holy ones of God, we must fetch the reason from some other head than their sinful nature; God rides some of them with a curb-bit, who though they open not their hearts to Christ savingly, yet truth is got so far into them by a powerful conviction, that it makes conscience say to them concerning their holy neighbours, what Pilate's wife by message said to her husband of Christ, *Have thou nothing to do with these just men, for I have suffered much concerning them*, Matth. 27. 19. But though there were ever mockers of holiness among the Saints, because there were ever wicked to be their neighbours; yet the Spirit of God prophesieth of a sort of mockers to come upon the Stage in the last days, that should differ from the ordinary scoffers that the people of God have been exercised with. And still the last is the worst; you know, those who mock and jeer at holiness, use to be men and women that pretend nothing to Religion themselves; such as walk in an open defiance to God, and wallow in all manner of wickedness: But the Spirit of God tells us of a new gang, that shall mock at holiness under a colour of holiness; they shall be as horribly wicked, some of them, as the worst of the former sort were, but wicked in a mystery. *Epist. Jude*, vers. 17, 18. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you, there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. But mark, lest we should expect them at the wrong door, and so mistake, thinking they should arise as formerly, from among the common swearers, drunkards, and other notorious sinners among us; he in the next words gives you as clear a character of them, as if they carried their name on their forehead, *vers. 19. These be they who separate*

themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit. Learned Malters Perkins reads the words thus, *these be Sect-makers, fleshly, not having the Spirit*. Sect-makers? those that separate themselves? do not our hearts tremble to see the mockers arrows shot out at this window? These are they who pretend more to purity of worship than others, and profess they separate on consciences account; because they cannot suffer themselves so much as to touch them that are unclean by joyning with them in holy Ordinances; and they mockers; they fleshly. Truly if the Spirit of God had not told us this, we should have gone last into their tent (as Laban did into Rachel's) as least suspecting that any mocker of holiness could stay there; yea, God forbid that we should lay it in general, as the charge of all who have separated from communion in the publick, many of whom (my conscience tells me) are lovers of holiness, and led (though out of their way) by the tenderness of their consciences, which when God hath better enlightened, will bring them as fast back to their brethren, as now it carrieth them from them. And truly, I think it might give a great lift to the making of them think of a return, if they would but in their sad and serious thoughts consider, how far many of those who went out from us with them are gone; even to mock at the holiness of those from whom once they parted, because they were not holy enough for their company; (God the searcher of hearts knows I speak this with a sad heart) so that were they to come and joyn with us again in some Ordinances, such scandal hath been given by them; that they who durst not joyn with us, ought not, as they are, to be admitted by us. How many of those have you heard of that began with a separation from our Assemblies, who mock at Sabbaths, cast off family-duties, indeed all prayer in secret by themselves, yea, drink in those cursed opinions; that make them speak scornfully of Christ the Son of God himself, and the great truths of the Gospel, which are the foundation of all true holiness? so that now, none are so great an object of their scorn, as those who walk most close to the holy rule of the Gospel: Well sirs, of what sort soever you are, whether Atheistical mockers at holiness, or such as mock true holiness in the disguise of a false one; take heed what you do, 'tis as much as your life is worth; *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked; nor suffer his grace to be mocked in his Saints*. You know how dearly that scoff did cost them, though but children, that spake it to the Prophet, *Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head*, 2 King. 2. 23. where, they did not only revile him with that nick-name of bald-head, but made a mock and jeer of Elijah's rapture into heaven, as if they had said, You would make us believe your Master is gone up to heaven, why do not you go up after him, that we may be rid of both your companies at once? And we need not wonder that these children should rise to such a height of wickedness so soon, if you observe the place where they liv'd at, Bethel, which was most infamous for Idolatry, and one of the two Cities where Jeroboam did set up his calves, 1 King. 12. 28. so that this seems but the natural language which

which they learnt (no doubt) from their idolatrous parents. God met with *Michal* also for despising her husband, merely upon a religious account, because he shew'd a holy zeal for God, which her proud spirit (as many others since have done) thought it too mean and base for a King to do. Well, what's her punishment? *Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.* The service of God was too low for a King in her thoughts, therefore shall none come out of her womb to sit on the Throne, or wear a Crown. It is great wickedness to mock at the calamity of another. *He that mocks the poor, reproacheth his Maker,* Prov. 17. 5. yea, to laugh at and triumph over a Saints sin is a heavy sin; so did some sons of *Belial*, when *David* fell into that sad temptation of Adultery and Murder. And they are endited for blaspheming God upon that account; what then is it to mock one for his holiness? sin carries some cause of shame, and gives naughty hearts an occasion to reproach him they see besmeared with that, which is so inglorious, and unbecoming, especially a Saint. But holiness, this is honourable, and stamps dignity on the person that hath it. It is not only the nobility of the creature, but the honour of the most high God himself; so runs his title of honour, *Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?* Exod. 15. 11. so that none can mock that, but upon the same account he must mock God infinitely more, because

there is infinitely more of that holiness, which he jeers at in the creature, to be found in God, than all the creatures, men and Angels in both worlds have among them; if you would contrive a way how to cast the greatest dishonour upon God, possible, you could not hit on the like to this. The *Romans*, when they would put contempt upon any, and degrade them of their nobility, they commanded that those their Statues and Portraits, which were set up in the City or Temples to their memory, should all be broken down. Every Saint is a lively image of God; and the more holy, the more like God; when thou therefore put'st scorn on them, and that for their holiness, now thou touchest God's honour nearly indeed; will nothing less content thee, but thou must deface that image of his, which he hath erected with so much cost in his Saints, on purpose that they might be a praise to him in the earth? was it such horrible wickedness in those Heathens, to cast fire into the Sanctuary, and to break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers? Psal. 74. 6, 7. of which the Church makes her moan, *vers. 10. O God how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever?* what then is in thy devilish malice, whose rage is spent, not on wood and stones, but the carved work of his Spirit, the grace and holiness of his living Temples?

CHAP. XVI.

An Exhortation to the Saints in three Branches.

Use 3. **T**Hirdly, It may be for exhortation to the Saints, in several particulars, I shall only name three, because I have directed my self in the whole Discourse chiefly to them.

First, Bless God that hath furnish'd thee with this Breast-plate; canst thou do less, when thou seest such multitudes on every hand slain before thy face by the destroyer of Souls, for want of this piece to defend their naked breasts against his murdering shot? Had God made thee great and rich in the world, but not holy, he had but given thee stock to trade with for hell. These would have made thee a greater booty for Satan, and only procured in the end a deeper damnation. When an enemy comes before a City that hath no walls nor arms to defend it, truly the richer it is, the worse it fares; when Satan comes to a man that hath much of the world about him, but nothing of God in his soul to defend him, O what miserable work doth he make with such? He takes what he pleaseth, and doth what he will; purse and all the poor wretch hath is at his command: Let a lust ask never so unreasonably, he hath not a heart to deny it, though he knows what the gratifying of it will cost him in another world, yet he'll damn his Soul rather than displease his lust. *Herod* throws half his Kingdom at the foot of a wanton wench, if she will ask it;

and because that was thought too little by her, he'll sacrifice his whole Kingdom to his lust; for so much the blood of *John Baptist* may be judg'd to have cost him in this life, being (so wakeful was Divine providence) shortly after turn'd out of his Throne, besides what he pays in the other. But when God made thee a holy man or woman, then he gave thee gates and bars to thy City, thou art now able through his grace to stand on thy defence, and with the continual succours heaven sends thee to withstand all his power. Thou wert once indeed a tame slave to him, but now he is a servant to thee; that day thou becamest holy, God did set thy foot on the Serpents head; thy lusts were once his strong holds with which he kept thee in awe, and out of which he did come and do thee so much hurt; but now these are out of his hand. O what joy is there in a Town, when the Castle that commanded it, is taken from the enemy? Now poor soul, Satan is dislodg'd and unkenneled, never more shall he play Rex in thy Soul as he hath done; in a word, when thou wert made a holy righteous person, then did God begin heaven in thy Soul; that day thou wert born again, an heir to heaven was born. And if such acclamations be at the birth of a young Prince, heir to some petty territories; hast not thou more cause that then had'st heavens glory settled on thee

in reversion? especially if thou considerest where all thy inheritance lay a little before, that thou couldst lay claim to. Paul joyns both together to make his Doxology full, *Col. 12, 13. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* O blessed change! to step out of the Devils dark dungeon, where thou wert kept in chains of sin and unrighteousness, prisoner for hell, into the Kingdom of Christs grace, where thou hast the golden chain of holiness and righteousness put about thy neck as heir apparent to heaven; such honour have all his Saints.

Secondly, Look thou keepest thy Breast-plate on, Christian. Need we bid the Souldier be careful of his Armour, when he goes into the field? can he easily forget to take that with him, or be persuaded to leave it behind him? Yet some have done so, and paid dear for their boldness. Better thou endure the weight of thy plate, though a little cumbersome to the flesh, than receive a wound in thy breast for want of it: Let this piece fall off, and thou canst keep none of the other on. If thou allowest thyself in any unholiness, thy sincerity, that will presently be called into question in thy conscience. I confess we find that *Peter*, a little after his fall in denying of his Master, had the testimony of his uprightness: *Joh. 20. 17. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee:* after Christ had thrice put it to the question, he could confidently vouch his sincerity; but we must know, *First*, That sin was not a deliberate sin, the poor man was surprized on a sudden; and *Secondly*, There had intervened his bitter sorrow between his sin and this his profession; and the renewing of his repentance so speedily, conduced much to the clearing of his sincerity to his conscience. But *David* found it harder work, who sinn'd more deliberately, and lay longer soaking in his guilt, as you may perceive, *Psal. 51. 10.* where he pleads so earnestly, that God would *renew a right spirit in him.*

Again, The Gospel-shoo will not come on thy foot so long as swell'd with any sinful humour (I mean any unrighteous or unholy practice) till allwag'd and purg'd out by repentance. Consider the Gospel in its preparation; Art thou in a fit case to suffer cheerfully for God, or patiently from God as thou art? No more than a souldier in a disease sick a-bed, is to take a hard march; unholiness renders the soul, as much as sickness doth the body, and indisposeth it to endure any hardship. *O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more,* *Psal. 39. 13.* *David* was not yet recovered out of that sin, which had brought him exceeding low, as you may perceive, *v. 10, 11.* And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingness, till his heart be in a holier frame; and for the peace of the Gospel, serenity of conscience, and inward joy; alas, all unholiness is to it as poyson is to the spirits which drinks them up; throw a stone into a brook, and though clear before, it

presently is royl'd and muddy. *He will speak peace unto his people, but let them not turn again to folly;* *Psal. 85. 8.* Mark here, what an item he gives, *But let them not turn*, and as if he had said, upon their peril be it; if they turn from holy walking, to folly, I'll turn from speaking peace, to speak terror.

Again, By thy negligence in thy holy walking, thou endangerest thy faith which is kept in a good conscience as the jewel in the cabinet; faith is an eye; all sin and unholiness casts a mist before this eye. A holy life to faith, is as a clear air and medium to the eye; we can see furthest in a clear day; thus faith sees furthest into the promise, when it looks through a holy, well ordered conversation; faith is a shield, and when does the souldier drop that out of his hand, but when dangerously wounded? And if faith fail, what will become of hope, which hangs upon faith, and draws all her nourishment from her, as the sucking child doth from the nurse? If faith cannot see a pardon in the promise, then hope cannot look for salvation; if faith cannot lay claim to Son-ship, then hope will not wait for the inheritance; faith tells the soul it hath peace with God, then the soul rejoiceth in the hope of glory, *Rom. 5.* And now Christian, what hast thou yet left for thy help? Wilt thou betake thyself to the Sword of the Spirit? Alas, how canst thou wield it, when by thy unholy walking thou hast lamed thy hand of faith that should hold it? This Sword hath two edges, with one it heals, with the other it wounds; with one it saves, with the other it damns. O'tis a dreadful weapon when it strikes with its wounding damning side; and for the other side thou hast nothing to do with it, while in any way of unholiness. Not a kind word in the whole Bible spoken to one sinning. Now poor creature, think and think again, is there any sin worth hazarding all this confusion and mischief, which if thou beest resolved to have it, will inevitably befall thy soul.

Thirdly, Be humble when thou art most holy; which way soever pride works (as thou shalt find it like the wind, sometimes at one door, sometimes at another) resist it. Nothing more baneful to thy holiness. It turns righteousness into hemlock, holiness into sin: Never art thou less holy, than when puffed up with the conceit of it; when we see a man blown up and swell'd with the dropsie, we can tell his blood is naught and waterish without opening a vein for the tryal: The more pride puffs thee, the less pure blood of holiness hast thou running in the veins of thy soul. *Behold his soul which is lifted up, is not upright,* *Hab. 2. 4.* See an ecce, like a sign, is set up at the proud mans door, that all passengers may know a naughty man dwells there: As thou wouldst not therefore, not only enfeeble the power of holiness, but also call in question the truth of thy holiness, take heed of pride; sometimes possibly thou wilt be ready to despise others, and bid them in thy thoughts stand off, as not so holy as thyself; this smells of the *Pharisees*, beware of it. It is the nature of holiness to depress our selves, and to give our brethren the advantage in

measuring their gifts or graces with our own; *In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves*, Phil. 2. 3. At another time possibly thou maist find a spice of the justiciaries disease hanging about thee; thy heart leaning on thy righteousness; and lifting up thy self into confidence of it, so as to expect thy acceptation with it, and salvation from God for that. O take heed of this, as thou lovest thy life. I may say to thee, as *Constantine* did to *Acetius* the *Novatian*, *Set then up thy ladder, and go to heaven by thy self*, for never any went this way thither; and dost thou think to be the only man that shall appear in heaven purchaser of his own happiness? Go first poor creature, and measure the length of thy ladder, by the extent of the holy Law; and if thou findest it but one round short of that, thou maist certainly conclude, it will leave thee short of heaven; if therefore thou hast beheld (to allude to that in *Job* 31. 27.) thy righteousness, when it hath shined, and thy holiness walking in its brightness; and thy heart thereby hath been enticed secretly, or thy mouth hath kissed thy hand; know this is a great wickedness, and in this thou hast denied the God above. Thou hast given the highest part of Divine worship unto a creature, the created Son of thy inherent holiness, which God hath appointed should be given alone to the increated Son of righteousness, the Lord Jesus, the *Lord our righteousness*. Renounce thy plea (as now thou hast laid it) for life and salvation, or else give thy cause as lost. Now the more effectually to keep down any insurrection of pride from the conceit of thy holiness, be pleased to take often these soul-humbling Considerations into thy serious thoughts.

First, Think frequently of the infinite holiness of God; when men stand high, their heads do not grow dizzy till they look down; when men look down upon those that are worse than themselves, or less holy than themselves, then their heads turn round; looking up would cure this disease. The most holy men, when once they have fixt their eyes a-while upon Gods holiness, and then looked upon themselves, they have been quite out of love with themselves, and could see nothing but unholiness in themselves. After the vision the Prophet had of God sitting on his Throne, and his heavenly Ministers of State, the *Seraphims* about him covering their faces, and crying, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*; how was this gracious man presently smitten with the sense of his own vileness! they did not more cry up God as holy, than he did cry out upon himself as *unclean*, *Esa*y 64. 5. So *Job*, *Now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self*, chap. 42. 5, 6. Never did the good man more loath himself for the putrid sores of his ulcerous body, when on the dung-hill he late and scraped himself, than now he did for the impurities of his Soul; we see our selves in a dark room, and we think we are fine and clean; but would we compass our selves with the beams of Gods glorious Majesty and holiness, then the Sun-rays would not discover more atones in the air, than the holiness of God would convince of sin to be in us. But 'tis the trick of pride not to come where

it may be out-shined; it had rather go where it shall be adored, than where it is sure to be put to shame.

Secondly, Often meditate of the holiness of mans innocent state. It is true, now if a believer, thou hast a principle of holiness planted in thee; but alas, what is that at present to what thy nature once had? They who saw the *second Temple*, and remembered not the first which *Solomon* built, they thought it no doubt a glorious fabrick; But others, whose eyes had seen the stately work and goodly buildings of the other, could not but rejoyce with tears in their eyes, *Ezra* 3. 12. *Many of the Priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid, wept with a loud voice*. O it revived the sad thoughts of the facking of that glorious structure; and so may these little beginnings upon a new foundation of the new Covenant, remind thee with sorrow to think of the ruines, that man in all his glory fell into by Satans policy; 'tis true, in heaven thou shalt have the odds of *Adam* in Paradise; but thou shalt have many a weary step before thou gettest up that hill; when a man who hath had some thousands a year, hath now but a few pounds *per annum* allowed him, and the rest requested from him for thirty or forty years: it is sad, though comfortable also, to think it shall at last return (and may be with a great over-plus) but at present he is put to many straits, and fain to make a hard shift to rub thorrow, so as to live any thing like his noble descent and family. Thus it is joyous to the Saint to think of heaven, when all his means shall come into his hands; but truly his imperfect grace, and the many expences he is at (from afflictions at Gods hands, temptations at Satans insinuations and intestine broils from remaining lusts within doors) do put him into many sad straits, that the poor soul is fain oft to snap short in his comfort, yea, much ado he hath to keep shop-windows open with the little stock he hath; hence the Christians getting to heaven, is set out as a business of so much difficulty. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. The wise Virgins had no oyl to spare; the Christian shall hold out, and that is even all. Think of this and let thy plumes fall.

Thirdly, Often meditate of thy own personal miscarriages, especially in thy unregenerate state. This kept *Paul* so humble; how oft does his unregenerate wicked conversation rise, though not in his conscience to darken his comfort, yet in his mind to qualifie the thoughts of his gifts and grace, 1 *Cor.* 15. 9, 10. where he speaks how he laboured more than them all: O how he way-lays his pride, that possibly might follow such his glorying too close at the heels, and therefore before he dares speak a word of his present holiness, he bolts the door upon pride, and first falls upon the story of that black part of his life; O how he batters his pride, and speaks himself all to naught! no enemy could have drawn his picture with a blacker coal, v. 7. he calls himself one *born out of time*, v. 9. *For I am the least of the Apostles, not meet to be called an Apostle*, because

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God

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because I persecuted the Church of God; and now having sufficiently besmeared and doused himself in the puddle of his former sins, how humbly doth the holy man speak of his transcendent graces? *vers. 10.* By the grace of God, I am that I am, and I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God. O this is the way of killing this weed of pride, to break up our hearts and turn the infide outward, I mean, humble and abase our selves for our former abominations. Pride will not easily thrive in a soyl where this plough often walks. Pride is a worm that bites and gnaws out the heart of grace: Now you know they are bitter things that must break the bag of worms that are gathered in the stomach; all sweet things nourish them; they are

bitter that scatter and kill them. O Christian, take some quantity of this *aloes* often, and with Gods blessing thou shalt find ease of that, which if a Christian, thou art troubled withal. And do not think, that this worm breeds only in children, weak Christians, and young Novices; I confess it is the most ordinary disease of that age; but aged and stronger Christians are not out of danger. Old David had this worm of pride crawling out of his mouth, when he bade Joab number the people; And dost not thou too oft take thy self, in numbering the duties and good works thou hast done, and the sufferings thou hast endured for thy God, with some secret self-applauding thoughts that tickle thee from them?

VERSE 15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

THis Verse presents us with the third piece of Armour in the Christians Panoply. A spiritual shoe, fitted to his foot, and to be worn by him, so long as he keeps the field against sin and Satan. And your feet shod, &c. We shall cast the words into distinct questions or enquiries, from the resolution of which will result the several Points to be insisted on.

First, What is meant by the Gospel?

Secondly, What by Peace, and why attributed to the Gospel?

Thirdly, What the Feet here mentioned import, and what grace is intended by the preparation of the Gospel of peace, which here is compared to the shoe, and fitted for these feet?

Quest. What is meant by the Gospel?

Ans. Gospel, according to the notation of the Original word, *εὐαγγέλιον*, signifies any good news, or joyful message; so *Jer. 20. 15.* *Curfed be the man who brought tydings to my father, saying, A man-child is born to thee, to make him glad:* Septuagint, *εὐαγγελιστεύειν τὸν πατέρα.* But usually in Scripture, it is restrain'd by way of excellency, to signify the Doctrine of Christ, and salvation by him to poor sinners. *I bring you glad tydings* (saith the Angel to the Shepherds) *of great joy,* Luke 2. 10. and *vers. 11.* he addeth, *Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* Thus 'tis taken in this place, and generally in the New Testament, and affords this Note.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the glad some news that the Gospel brings, is declared from the five particulars, requisite to fill up the joyfulness of a message; with a word to stir up our bowels in pitying those that never heard any of this news.

Note. THE revelation of Christ, and the grace of God through him, is without compare the best news and joyfulest tydings that poor sinners can hear. It is such a message, as no good news can come before it, nor no ill news follow. No good news can come before it; no, not from God himself to the creature; He cannot issue out any blessing to poor sinners, till he hath shewn mercy to their Souls in Christ. *God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us,* Psal. 67. 1.

First, God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless, or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till Gospel-grace, pardoning mercy, stamp and make them

current; God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us; *on earth peace, good will to men,* Luke 2. 14. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a Kingdom befallen to him, if he may not have it with Gods good will.

Again, No ill news can come after the glad-tydings of the Gospel, where believingly embraced. Gods mercy in Christ, alters the very property of all evils to the believer. All plagues and judgments that can befall the creature in the world, when baptized in the stream of Gospel-grace, receive a new name, come on a new errand, and have a new taste on the believers palate; as the same water by running through some Mine, gets a tang and a healing vertue, which before it had not, *Esay 32. 24.*

Gospel

The inhabitants shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be pardoned their iniquity. Observe, he doth not say, *they shall not be sick*; Gospel-grace doth not exempt from afflictions; but, *they shall not say I am sick*. They shall be so ravished with the joy of Gods pardoning mercy, that they shall not complain of being sick; this, or any other cross is too thin a veil to darken the joy of the other good news. This is so joyful a message which the Gospel brings, that God would not have Adam long without it, but open'd a crevice to let some beams of this light (that is pleasant to behold) into his soul, amaz'd with the terror of Gods presence, without which, as he was turned out of Paradise, so had he been turned into hell immediately, for such the world would have been to his guilty conscience. This is the news God used to tell his people of (on a design to comfort them and cheer them) when things went worse with them, and their affairs were at the lowest ebb, *Isa. 7. 14. Micah 5. 5.* This is the great secret which God whispers by his Spirit in the ear of those only he embraces with his special distinguishing love, *Luke 10. 21. 1 Cor. 2. 12.* so that it is made the sad sign of a soul mark'd out for hell, to have the Gospel hid from it, *2 Cor. 4. 3.* To wind up this in a few words, there meet all the properties of a joyful message in the glad-tydings of the Gospel. Five ingredients are desirable in a message, yea must all conspire to fill up the joyfulness thereof into a redundancy.

First, *It must be good*; none rejoyce to hear evil news: Joy is the dilatation of the heart, whereby it goes forth to meet and welcome in what it desires; and this must needs be some good. Ill news is sure to find the heart shut against it, and to come before it is welcome.

Secondly, *It must be some great good*, or else it affects little; affections are stirr'd according to the degrees of good or evil in the object presented: A thing we hear may be so inconsiderable, that it is no great odds how it goes; but if it be good, and that great also, of weighty importance, this causeth proportionable. The greater the bell, the more strength is required to raise it. It must be a great good that raiseth great joy.

Thirdly, *This great good must immediately concern them that hear it*; my meaning is, they must have propriety in it; for though we can rejoyce to hear of some great good befallen another; yet it affects most, when it is emptied into our own bosom. A sick man doth not feel the joy of anothers recovery with the same advantage as he would do his own.

Fourthly, *It would much add to the joyfulness of the news, if this were inauditum or insperatum, unheard of, unlook'd for*; when the tydings steal upon us by way of surprize. The further our own ignorance or despair have set us off all thoughts of so great enjoyment, the more joy it brings with it, when we hear the news of it. The joy of a poor swine-herds son, who never dream'd of a Crown, would be greater at the news of such a thing conferr'd on him, than he whose birth invited him to

look for it, yea promised it him as his inheritance; such a one his heart would stand but level to the place, and therefore could not be so ravish'd with it as another who lay so far below such a preferment.

Lastly, To fill up the joy of all these, *It is most necessary that the news be true and certain*, or else all the joy soon leaks out. What great joy would it afford to hear of a Kingdom befallen to a man, and the next day or month, to hear all cross'd again and prove false? Now in the glad-tydings of the Gospel, all these do most happily meet together, to wind up the joy of the believing soul to the highest pin that the strings of his affections can possibly bear.

First, The news which the Gospel hath in its mouth to tell us poor sinners, *is good*. It speaks promises, and they are significations of some good intended by God for poor sinners. The Law, that brings ill news to town, threatnings are the *lingua vernacula legis*, it can speak no other language to sinners, but denunciations of evil to come upon them; But the Gospel smiles on poor sinners, and plains the wrinkles that sit on the Laws brow, by proclaiming promises.

Secondly, The news the Gospel brings is as great as good. It was that the Angel said, *Luke 2. 10. I bring you tydings of great joy*; great joy it must needs be, because it is all joy. The Lord Christ brings such news in his Gospel, as that he hath left nothing for any after him to add to it; if there be any good wanting in the tydings of the Gospel, we find it elsewhere than in God; for in the Covenant of the Gospel, he gives himself through Christ to the believing soul; surely the Apostles Argument will hold, *All things are yours, ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods*, *1 Cor. 3. 22.* The Gospel lays our pipes close to the fountain of goodness it self, and he sure must have all that is united to him that hath that is all. Can any good news come to the glorified Saints which heaven doth not afford them? In the Gospel we have news of that glory. *Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel*, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* The Sun in the firmament discovers only the lower world; *Obsecrat calum, dum revelat terram*; O it hides heaven from us, while it shews the earth to us; but the Gospel enlightens both at once. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, *1 Tim. 4. 8.*

Thirdly, The Gospel doth not tell us news we are little concern'd in; Not, what God has done for Angels, but for us; *Unto you* (saith the Angel) *is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord*; If charity made Angels rejoyce for our happiness, surely then the benefit which is paid in to our nature by it, gives a further pleasure to our joy at the hearing of it. It were strange that the messenger who only brings the news of some great Empire to be devolved on a person, should sing, and the Prince to whom it falls, should not be glad. And, as the Gospels glad-tydings belong to mans nature, not to Angels; so in particular, to thee poor Soul, whoever thou art, that embracest Christ in the arms of thy Faith. A Prince

is a common good to all his Kingdom; every subject, though never so mean, hath a part in him, and so is Christ to all believers. The promises are so laid, that like a well-drawn picture, they look on all, that look on them by an eye of Faith. The Gospels joy is thy joy, that hath but Faith to receive it.

Fourthly, The glad-tydings of the Gospel were unheard of, unlook'd for by the sons of men; such news it brings, as never could have entred into the heart of man to conceive, till God unlock'd the cabinet of his own good pleasure, and revealed the counsel of his will, wherein this mysterious price of love to fallen man, lay hid far enough from the prying eye of the most quick-sighted Angel in heaven, much more from man himself, who could read in his own guilty conscience within, and spell from the Covenant without (now broken by him) nothing but his certain doom and damnation. So that the first Gospel-Sermon preach'd by God himself to Adam, anticipated all thoughts of such a thing intended by him. O who can conceive (but one that hath really felt the terrors of an approaching hell in his despairing soul) how joyous the tydings of Gospel-mercy is to a poor soul, dwelling amidst the black thoughts of despair, and bordering on the very marches of the region of utter darkness? Story tells us of a Noble-man of our Nation in King Henry the eighth's reign, to whom a pardon was sent a few hours before he should have been beheaded, which (being not at all expected by him) did so transport him that he dyed for joy. And if the vessel of our nature be so weakly hoopt, that the wine of such an inferiour joy breaks it; how then could it possibly be able to bear the full joy of the Gospel-tydings which doth as far exceed this, as the mercy of God doth the mercy of a mortal man; and as the deliverance from an eternal death in hell, doth a deliverance from a temporary death, which is gone before the pain can well be felt.

Fifthly, and lastly, The glad-tydings of the Gospel are certainly true. It is no flying Report, cryed up to day, and like to be crost to morrow; not news that is in every ones mouth, but none can tell whence it came, and who the Author of it, we have it from a good hand, God himself, to whom it is impossible to lye, he from Heaven voucheth it, *This is my beloved Son, hear him*, Luke 9. What were all those Miracles which Christ wrought, but Ratifications of the truth of the Gospel? Those wretches that denied the truth of Christs doctrine, were forced many times to acknowledge the Divinity of his Miracles; which is a pretty piece of nonsense, and declares the absurdity of their unbelief to all the World. The Miracles were to the Gospel, as Seals to a Writing. They could not deny God to be in the Miracles, and yet they could not see him in the Doctrine; as if God would set his Seal to an untruth. Here (Christians) is that which fills up the joy of this good news the Gospel brings; that we may lay our lives upon the truth of it, it will never deceive any that lay the weight of their confidence on it. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came*

into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 45. This bridge, which the Gospel lays over the gulf of God's wrath for poor sinners to pass from their sins into the favour of God here, and Kingdom of God hereafter, is supported with no other arches, than the wisdom, power, mercy and faithfulness of God; so that the believing soul need not fear, till it sees these bow or break. It is called the *everlasting Gospel*, Rev. 14. 16. When Heaven and Earth go to wrack, not the least *Iota* or tittle of any promise of the Gospel shall be buried in their ruins. *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached to you*, 1 Pet. 1. 25.

Use 1. Pity those that never heard word of this good news: Such there are in the World, whole Nations, with whom the day is not yet broke, but a dismal night of ignorance and barbarism continues to be stretched over them; whose forlorn souls are under a continual massacre from the bloody butcher of Hell; an easie conquest (God knows) that soul fiend makes of them; who lays his cruel Knife to their throats, and meets with no resistance; because he finds them fast asleep in ignorance, utterly destitute of that light which alone can discover a way to escape the hands of this destroyer. What heart (that ever tasted the sweetness of Gospel-grace) trembles not at their deplored state? yea, doth not stand astonished at the difference of Gods dispensations to them and us? *Lord, why wilt thou manifest thy self to us, and not to the world?* God pardon the unmercifulness of our hearts, that we can weep no more over them. Truly we do not live so far from the *Moors and Indians*, but we may (by not pitying of them, praying for them, and earnest desiring their conversion) besmear our selves with the guilt of their souls blood, which is shed continually by the destroyer of mankind. O how seldom is their miserable condition the companion of our sorrowful thoughts? and their conversion the subject of our prayers and desires? There have been, alas, in the world, more counsels how to ease them of their gold, than enrich them with the treasure of the Gospel: How to get their land, than how to save their souls. But the time is coming; when winning souls will be found more honourable than conquering Nations. Well Christian, though thou canst not impart to them what God hath laid on thy trencher; yet as thou sit'st at the Feast of the Gospel, think of those poor souls, and that compassionately, who starve to death for want of that bread, with which thou art fed unto eternal life. There is an opinion which some have lately taken up, that the Heathens may spell Christ out of the Sun, Moon and Stars; these may seem kinder than others have been to them; but I wish it doth not make them more cruel to them in the end. I mean by not praying so heartily for Gospel-light to arise among them; as those must needs do, who believe them under a sad necessity of perishing without it; when a Garrison is judged pretty well stored with provision for its defence, it is an occasion, that relief and succour comes the slower to it. And I wish Satan had not such a design

design against those forlorn souls in this principle; if such a lesson were to be got by the Stars, we should ere this have heard of some that had learn'd it. Indeed I find a Star led the Wise men to Christ; but they had a heavenly Preacher to open the Text to them, or else they would never have understood it.

C H A P. II.

Lamentation for the unkind welcome that Gospel-News finds in the world; with two or three sad grounds of Fear as to us in this Nation, taken from the present entertainment the Gospel hath among us, with a double Exhortation to the Saints to rejoyce in this joyous Message, and chiefly in this.

S E C T. I.

Use 2. **A** Sad lamentation may be here taken up, that so good News should have such ill welcome, as the Gospel commonly finds in the World. When the tydings was first told at Jerusalem, of a Saviour being born, one would have thought (especially if we consider that the Scripture reckoning was now out, for the birth of the Messiah, and they big with expectation of his coming) that all hearts should have leap'd within them for joy at the News, to see their hopes so happily delivered and accomplish'd; but behold the clean contrary. Christs coming proves matter of trouble and distaste to them; they take the alarm at his birth, as if an enemy, a destroyer (not a Saviour) were landed in their Coast, and as such, Herod goes out against him, and makes him flee the Countrey. But possibly, though at present they stumble at the meanness of his Birth and Parentage; yet when the rays of his Divinity shall shine through his miracles, then they will religiously worship him, whom now they contemn; when he comes forth into his publick Ministry, opens his Commission, and shews his Authority; yea, with his own blessed lips tells the joyful Message he brings from his Father unto the sons of men; then surely they will dearly love his person, and thankfully embrace, yea, greedily drink in the glad-tydings of salvation which he preacheth to them: No, they persist in their cursed unbelief, and obstinate rejecting of him; though the Scripture, (which they seem'd to adore) bear so full a testimony for Christ, that it accuseth them to their own consciences, yet they will have none of him. Christ tells them so much, *Joh. 5. 39, 40. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life; Life they desired, yet will lose it rather, than come to him for it. And is the World now amended? doth Christ in his Gospel meet with any kinder usage at the hands of most? The Note that Christ sings is still the same, Come unto me that you may have life. The worst hurt Christ does poor souls that come unto him, is to put them into a state of life and salvation; and yet where is the person that likes the offer? O 'tis other News that men generally listen after; this makes the Exchange, the Marketplace so full, and the Church so thin and empty.*

Most expect to hear their best News from the World; they look upon the News of the Gospel as foreign, and that which doth not so much concern them (at least at present) 'tis time enough to mind this, when they are going into another World; Alas, the Gospel is not accommodated to their carnal desires, it tells them of no fields and vineyards it hath to give, it invites them not with the gayeties of worldly honours and pleasures; had Christ in his Gospel but gratified the cravings of mens lusts with a few promises for these things (though he had promised less for another world) the news would have gone down better with these Sots, who had rather hear one prophetic of wine and strong drink, than preach of Heaven it self. Truly, they are but a very few (and those sufficiently jeer'd for their pains) that like the Message of the Gospel so well, as to receive it cordially into their hearts; if any one does but give entertainment to Christ, and be known, what an alarm does it give to all his carnal Neighbours? who, if they do not presently beset his house (as the Sodomites did Lot's) yet set some brand of scorn upon him; yea, make account they have now reason enough to despise and hate him, how well soever they loved him before. O what will God do with this degenerate age we live in? O England, England, I fear some sad judgement or other bodes thee! If such glad-tydings as the Gospel brings be rejected, sad news cannot be far off, I cannot think of less than of a departing Gospel. God never made such a settlement of his Gospel among any people, but he could remove it from them. He comes but upon liking, and will he stay, where he is not welcome? Who will, that hath elsewhere to go? It is high time for the Merchant to pack up and be gone, when few or none will buy; Nay, when instead of buying, they will not suffer him to be quiet in his shop, but throw stones at him, and dirt on his richest commodities. Do we not see the names of Christs faithful Messengers bleeding at this day under the reproaches that flie so thick about their ears? Are not the precious truths of the Gospel almost covered with the mire and dirt of errors and blasphemies, which men of corrupt minds (set on work by the Devil himself) have raked out of every filthy puddle and sink of old Hereticks, and thrown on the face of Christ and his Gospel? And where is the hand so kind, as to wipe off that which they throw on? The heart so valiant

valiant for the truth, that will stop these foul mouths, from spitting their venom against Christ and his Gospel? If any thing be done of this kind, alas, 'tis so faintly, that they gather heart by it; Justice is so favourably sprinkled, like a few drops upon fire, that it rather encreaseth the flame of their rage against the truth, than quencheth it. A Prince calls not home his Ambassador for every affront that is offered him in the streets; but when he is affronted, and can have no redress for the wrong.

SECTION II.

Object. But some may say, though it cannot be denyed, that the Gospel hath found very unkind entertainment by many among us, and especially of late years, since a spirit of error hath so sadly prevailed in the land; yet make us not worse than we are. There is, blessed be God, a remnant of gracious souls are yet to be found, to whom Christ is precious; who gladly embrace the message of the Gospel, and weep in secret for the contempt that is cast upon it by men of corrupt minds, and prophane hearts; and therefore we hope we are not in such imminent danger of losing the Gospel as your fears suggest.

Ans. If there were not such a sprinkling of Saints among us, our case were indeed desperate, *Conclusum esset de nobis.* The shades of that dismal night would quickly be upon us: These are they that have held the Gospel thus long among us. Christ had, as to his Gospel-presence, been gone ere this, had not these hung about his legs, and with their strong cries and prayers entreated his stay. But there are a few considerations as to these, which seriously weighed, will not leave us without some tremblings of heart.

First, Consider what little proportion (as to the number I mean) do these that embrace the Gospel, bear with those that continue to reject it; those that desire to keep Christ among us, and those that wish him gone, and would gladly be rid of him. Were it put to the vote, would not they carry it by thousands of thousands, that care not whether we have a Gospel or not? And doth it not prophesie sadly, when the odds is so great? In all the departures of God from a people, there were ever some holy ones mingled among the rout of sinners. *Sardis* had her few names which had not defiled their garments; but yet the Candlestick was removed. All that they could get was a promise for themselves in particular, *Rev. 3. 4. They shall walk with me in white;* but no protection for the Church. God can pull down the House, and provide well for his Saints also, that he finds there. A few voices are easily drown'd in the out-cry of a multitude; a few Pints of wine are hardly tasted in a Tun of water: And a little number of Saints can do sometimes but little to the saving of a wretched people among whom they live; possibly as in a weak body, where the disease hath got the mastery, nature putting forth its *summum conatum*, its utmost strength, may keep life a while in the body some dayes or weeks, but cannot long without some help to evacuate the distemper; so a few

Saints, shut up in a degenerate age amongst an ungodly Christ-despising people, may a while prorogue the judgement, and reprieve a while the life of such a people; but if there be no change made upon them for the better, ruine must needs break in upon them.

Secondly, Consider of these few gracious ones found amongst us, that embrace the Gospel; How many are new Converts, such I mean, as the Gospel hath of late dayes won to Christ? I am afraid you will find this little number of Saints chiefly to consist of old Disciples, such as were wrought upon many years since. Alas, the womb of the Gospel hath been in a great measure shut up of late, as to the bringing forth of souls by a thorow solid work of conversion. Indeed, if they may pass for Converts, that baptize themselves into a new way and form of worship; or that begin their Religion with a tenet and an opinion; we have more than a good many to shew of these; but in this old age of *Englands* withered profession, how great a Rarity is a sincere Convert? We cannot deny, but God is graciously pleased to bring the pangs of the new birth now and then upon some poor souls in our Assemblies, (that his despised servants may have his seal to confirm their Ministry, and stop those mouths which are so scornfully open'd against it;) yet alas, it is but here and there one; and doth not this prophesie sadly to this Nation? I am sure, when we see a Tree that used to stand thick with Fruit, now bring forth but little, may be an apple on this bough, and another on that, we look upon it as a dying Tree. *Leah* comforted her self from her fruitfulness, *That therefore her husband would love her, and cleave to her,* *Gen. 29. 34.* May we not on the contrary fear, that God will not love, but leave a people when they grow barren under the means of grace? God threatens as much, *Jer. 6. 8. Be instructed O Jerusalem; lest my soul depart from thee;* and if Gods soul departs, then he is upon his remove, as to his visible presence also; so indeed it follows, *Lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.* O my Brethren, those golden dayes of the Gospel are over, when Converts came flying as a Cloud, as the Doves to their windows in flocks. Now Gospel-news grows stale, few are taken with it. Though a Kingdom hath much treasure and riches in it; yet if trade cease, no new bullion comes in, nor Merchandize be imported; it spends upon its old stock, and must needs in time decay; our old store of Saints (the treasure of their times) wears away apace; what will become of us, if no new ones come in their room? Alas, when our burials are more than our births, we must needs be on the losing hand. There is a sad List of holy Names taken away from us; but where are they which are born to God? If the good go, and those which are left continue bad; yea, become worse and worse, we have reason to fear, that God is clearing the ground, and making way for a judgement.

Thirdly, Consider the unhappy contentions and divisions that are found among the people of God, yet left upon the place; these prophesie sadly the Lord knows. Contentions ever portend ill. The remarkable

remarkable departures of God (recorded in Scripture) from the Church of the *Jews*, found them divided and crumbled into parties. And the *Asian* Churches no less. Christ lets up the light of his Gospel to walk and work by, not to fight and wrangle; and therefore it were no wonder at all, if he should put it out, and so end the dispute. If these storms, which have been of late years upon us (and are not yet off) had but made Christians, as that did the Disciples, *Mark* 6. 48. ply their Oar, and lovingly row all one way, it had been happy; we might then have expected Christ to come walking towards us in mercy, and help us safe to land; but when we throw away the Oar, and fall a scuffling in the ship, while the wind continues loud about us; truly we are more like to drive Christ from us, than invite him to us; we are in a more probable way of sinking, than saving the ship and our selves in it.

SECT. III.

Use 3. A word of Exhortation, and first to you who yet have not closed with the terms of the Gospel; be persuaded to receive the message of the Gospel kindly, believingly into your hearts; 'Tis the best news you can send back to Heaven, as a gratulatory return for the glad-tydings that the Gospel brings from thence. Thy embracing Christ preach'd to thee in the Gospel, will be as welcome news to Heaven (I can tell thee) as the tydings of Christ and salvation through him can be to thee; *There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner.* Heaven soon rings of this. The *Angels* that sang Christ into the world, will not want a Song when he is received into thy heart, for he came into the world for this end. Christ descended when he came into the world, but now he ascends: That was an act of his humiliation, this of exaltation. The highest created Throne that God can sit in, is the soul of a believer; no wonder then, that Christ calls all his friends to joy with him at the souls return to him and reception of him, *Luke* 15. 9. What joy is now in heaven upon this occasion, we may collect from the joy it drew from Christ when on earth. It was some great good news that could wring a smile then from Christ, or tune his Spirit into a joyful note, who was a man of sorrows, and indeed came into the world to be so; yet when his Disciples (whom he had sent forth to preach the Gospel) return'd with news of some victorious success of their labours, *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank thee O Father,* *Luke* 10. 21. of all the hours of his life, that is the hour, wherein Christ would express his joy; which (with the care of the Spirit to record this passage in the History of Christs life) shews, that Christ had an especial design in that expression of his joy at that time, and what could it be, but to let us know, how much his heart was set upon the work of saving Souls? and that when he should be gone to heaven; if we meant to send any joyful news to him thither, it should be of the prosperous and victorious success the Gospel hath over our hearts. This, this which could make

him rejoice in the midst of his sorrows here on earth, must needs be more joyous to him in heaven, now where he hath no bitterness from his own sufferings (which are all healed, past and gone) to mingle with the joy of this news: And, if the kind reception of the Gospel, be such joyful news to him; you may easily conceive, how distasteful the rejecting of it is to him. As he rejoiced in Spirit to hear the Gospel prevail'd; so he cannot but be angry, when it meets with a repulse from the unbelieving world. *Luke* 14. 21. we find the *Master of the house* (that is Christ) angry, when his servants sent to invite his guests (that is, preach the Gospel) return with a denial from those that were bidden, for so their mannerly excuses were interpreted by Christ, yea so angry, that he claps a fearful doom upon them; *not one of those invited shall taste of my supper.* God can least bear any contempt cast upon his grace. The *Jews* though they had many grievous calamities befell them for their idolatries and other sins; yet never any like that, which their rejecting Christ brought upon them; under those they relented; but under this they harden'd. They would not come when the supper was on the table; and therefore the cloath is drawn, and they go supperless to bed, and dye in their sins; while they shut the door of their hearts against Christ, this pad-lock (as I may so call it) of judiciary impenitence is fastened to it. Christ needs take no other revenge on a soul for its refusing him, to make it miserable to the height, than to condemn such a one to have in his own desire; Christ thou wilt not, Christ therefore thou shalt not have. O unhappy soul thou! that hast offers of Christ, but dyest without Christ. Thou goest with thy full lading to damnation; none but so deep in hell, as those that fall into it, with a stumble at Christ. That Gospel which brings now good news, will, when thou shalt have a repetition Sermon of it at the great day, bring the heaviest tydings with it that ever thy ears heard.

SECT. IV.

Secondly, To you who have entertain'd the message of the Gospel.

First, Rejoyce at the news; glad tydings, and sad hearts, do not well together: when we sit one heavy and sorrowful; we ask him, what ill news he hath heard. Christian, what ill news hath Christ brought from heaven with him, that makes thee walk with thy folded arms and pensive countenance? *Psal.* 132. 16. To see a wicked man merry and jocund, or a Christian sad and dumpish, is alike uncomely. *A feast is made for laughter,* saith *Solomon,* *Eccles.* 10. 19. I am sure God intended his peoples joy in the feast of the Gospel; Mourning were not to sit at Gods table, *Deut.* 26. Truly the Saints heaviness reflects unkindly upon God himself; we do not commend his cheer, if it doth not cheer us. What, saith the world? The Christians life is but a melancholy walk, sure thinks the carnal wretch, it is a dry feast they sit at, where so little wine of joy is drunk. And wilt thou confirm them in this their opinion, Christian? Shall they have thy example

example to produce against Christ and his Word, which promise peace and joy to all that will come to this Feast? O God forbid, that thy conversation, wherein thou art to hold forth the Word of life, to live in the eyes of the world, and which ought to be as a Comment or gloss upon the Word, to clear up the truth and reality of it to others; that this should so disagree from the Text, as to make the glad some tydings spoken of in it, more disputed and question'd in the thoughts of the unbelieving world than before. It is an error I confess, and that a gross one which the *Papists* teach; that we cannot know the Scriptures to be the Word of God, but by the testimony of the Church; yet it is none to say, that a practical testimony from the Saints lives, hath great authority over the consciences of men, to convince them of the truth of the Gospel. Now they'll believe 'tis good news indeed the Gospel brings, when they can read it in your chearful lives; But when they observe Christians sad with this cup of salvation in their hands, truly they suspect the wine in it is not so good as the Preachers commend it to them for. Should men see all that trade to the *Indies*, come home poorer than they went, it would be hard to persuade others to venture thither, for all the golden mountains said to be there. O Christians, let the world see you are not losers in your joy, since you have been acquainted with the Gospel; give not then cause to think by your uncomfortable walking, that when they turn Christians, they must bid adieu farewell, and resolve to spend their days in a house of mourning.

Secondly, is the Gospel a message of glad tydings? do we then for shame, Christian, run on the worlds folly by taking up any of its carnal joy; Thou needst not go out of Gods house to be merry; Have joy enough in the glad tydings of the Gospel, more than thou canst spend, though thou shouldst live at an higher rate than thou doest or canst here on earth. *Abraham* would not take so much as a thread, or shoole-latchet from the King of *Sodom*, Gen. 14. lest he should say, that he made *Abraham* rich. A Christian should deny himself of the worlds joy and delights; lest they say, these Christians draw their joy out of our cistern. The channel is cut out of the Spirit of God, in which he would have his Saints joy run. If any be merry, let him sing *Psalms*. Let the subject of his mirth be spiritual, as on the other hand, If he be sick, let him pray, James 5. 13. A carnal vent is given to both affections of sorrow and joy. *Aliter ludet ganeo, aliter Princeps*. A Princes recreation must not be like *Ruffians*, nor a Christians joy like the carnal mans; if ever there was need to call upon Christians to feed the lamp of their joy with spiritual fewel, holy oyl, that drops from a Gospel pipe, now the time is, wherein professors do sympathize with the world in their outward bravery, jollifications, fashions, pastimes, and are so kind to the flesh in allowing of, yea, pleading so much for a carnal liberty in these things, that shews too plainly the spiritual joy to be drawn out of these wells of salvation, does not satisfy them, or else they would not make up their draught from this puddle water, which was wont to be thirsted after, only by those,

that had never drunk of Christs cup. O what is the reason, that those, who would pass for Christians, forsake this pure wine of Gospel joy, for the sophisticated stuff, which this whore, the world presents in her golden cup to them? Is it because the glad some message of the Gospel is grown stale, and so its joy (which once sparkled in the preaching of it, as generous wine doth in the cup, and cheer'd the hearts of believers with strong consolations) hath now lost its spirits? or can that pure stream of spiritual joy, which hath run so long through the hearts and lives of the Saints in so many generations, without mingling with the brackish water of the worlds sensual pleasures, at last fall in with them, and be content to lose its own divine nature and sweetness in such a sink? O no! The Gospel is the same it was; the joy it brings as sweet, and brisk, as spiritual, and pure as ever it was, and will be as long as God and Christ continue to be the same, out of whose bosom of love it first flowed, and is still fed: But the professors of this Gospel now are not the same, with those holy men and women of primitive times. The world grows old, and mens affections with it chill and cold; we have not our taste so lively, nor our spirits so chaste and pure, to relish the heavenly viands disht forth in the Gospel. The cheer is as good as ever, but the guests are worse, we are grown debauched in our judgements, and corrupt in our principles; no wonder then if carnal in our joys. Error is a whore, it takes away the heart from Christ and his spiritual joys. The head once distempered, soon affects the heart, and by dropping the malignity of its principles upon it, poisons it with carnal affections, and carnal affections cannot fare with any other, than gross and carnal joys. Here, here is the root of the misery of our times. Hath not (think you) the Devil plaid his game cunningly among us? who by his instruments (transforming themselves into the likeness of Angels of light) First could raise so many credulous souls into a fond expectation of higher attainments in grace and comfort from their new pretended light, than ever yet the Saints were acquainted with, and at last to make them fall so low, be so reasonable, (or rather unreasonable) as to accept such sensual pleasures and joys as this world can afford, in full payment for all the glorious things he promised them? Well Sirs, this I hope will make some love the Gospel the more, and stick closer to it as long as they live. O Christians, blest God for the glad-tydings of the Gospel, and never lend an ear to him, that would be telling you other news, except you mean to part with truth to purchase a lie; yea, let it make you careful to draw all your comfort and joy from the Gospels breast; when a carnal heart would be merry, he doth not take the Bible down to read in that; he doth not go into the company of the promises, and walk in the meditation of them; it brings no joy to him, to think of Christ or Heaven; no, he takes down a Play-book may be, seeks some jovial company, goes to the Exchange or Market, to hear what news he can meet with. Every one, as his haunt lies: but still 'tis from the world he expects his joy. And now where lies thy road Christian? whither

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Gospel ✓

Carnal heart

doth thy soul lead thee for thy joy? doest not thou go to the Word, and read there, what Christ has done for thee on earth, and is doing for thee in heaven? is not the Throne of Grace the Exchange; to which thou resortest for good news from that far country, heaven, where all thy estate lies, and thy best friends live? art not thou listening, what promise he'll speak peace from to thy soul? if so, thou hast not thy name for nought: thou art a Christian indeed. *Qui litteris addicti sumus, (saith Erasmus) animi lassitudinem a studiis gravioribus contraximus, ab eisdem studiis, sed amenioribus recreamus.* True students, that love their book indeed, when they have weary'd their spirits with study, can recreate them again with study, by making a diversion from that which is severe and knotty, to some more facile

and pleasant subject. Thus the true Christian, when his spirits are worn and wasted in the severe exercises of Christianity; such as are fasting and prayer, wherein he afflicts both body and soul for his sins, then can he recover them at the feast of Gods love in Christ, where he sees his water turned into wine, and the tears that even now his sin covered his face withal, wash'd off with the blood of Christ; when his soul is struck into a fear and trembling with the consideration of the justice of God, and the terror of his threatnings and judgements for sin, then the meditation of the sweet promises of the Gospel recreate and revive him; so that in the same word, where he meets with his wound, he finds his healing; where he hath his sorrow, there also receives his joy.

CHAP. III.

A fourfold Peace attributed to the Gospel, and in particular, Peace of Reconciliation, where it is proved there is a quarrel betwixt God and man, as also that the Gospel can only take it up, and why God thus laid the method of mans recovery so.

Quest. 2. **T**HE second enquiry follows; What peace is here meant, that is attributed to the Gospel? Peace is a comprehensive word. *We looked for peace (saith the Prophet) but no good came, Jer. 8. 15.* Peace brings, and carries away again with it all good, as the Sun doth light to and from the world; when Christ would to the utmost express how well he wish'd his Disciples, he wraps up all the happiness which his large heart could bestow them in this blessing of peace. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, Joh. 14. 27.* Now take peace in its greatest latitude (if not spurious) and it will be found to grow upon this Gospel-root. So that we shall lay the conclusion in general terms.

Doct. 1. True peace is the blessing of the Gospel, and only of the Gospel. This will appear in the several kinds of peace. Which may be sorted into these four,

First, Peace with God, which we may call peace of reconciliation.

Secondly, Peace with our selves, or peace of conscience.

Thirdly, Peace with one another, or peace of love and unity.

Fourthly, Peace with the other creatures, even the most hurtful, which may be call'd a piece of indemnity, and service.

To begin where all other begin with peace of reconciliation with God. For when man fell out with God, he fell out with himself, and all the world besides; and he can never come to be at peace with these, till his peace be made with God, *Tranquillus Deus, tranquillat omnia*; the point then is,

Doct. 1. The peace of reconciliation with God is the blessing of the Gospel. Three things are here to be done in prosecution of the point. First, I shall shew you that there is a quarrel between God and man. Secondly, that the Gospel, and only the

Gospel takes this up, and makes peace betwixt God and man. Thirdly, why God conveys this peace of reconciliation into the world in this way, and by this method.

First, There is a quarrel depending betwixt God and the sons of men, open acts of hostility by one Nation against another, proclaim there a war commenced. Now, such acts of hostility betwixt God and man: Bullets flie thick to and fro on either hand. Man he lets flie against God (though against his will he shoots short) whole volleys of sins and impieties. The best of Saints acknowledge thus much of themselves, before converting grace took them off, *Titus 3. 3. We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.* Mark the last words, *serving lusts and pleasures.* They were in pay to sin, willing to fight against God, and with this his only enemy. Not a faculty of his, or member of his body, which is not in arms against him. *The carnal mind (saith the Apostle) is set against God, Rom. 8. 7.* And if there be war in the mind, to be sure there can be no peace in the members (inferiour faculties I mean of the body) which are commanded all by it. Indeed we are by nature worst in our best part, the enmity against God is chiefly seated in the superiour faculties of the soul. As in Armies, the common soldiery is what taken up with the booty and spoil they get by the war, without much minding one side or other; but the more principal officers, especially the Prince or General, these go into the field full of enmity against them that oppose them: so the inferiour faculties, seek only satisfaction to their sensual appetite in the booty that sin affords; but the superiour faculties of the mind, this comes forth more directly against God, and opposeth his sovereignty; yet if it could lay a plot effectual to take away the life of God

Gospel
Peace

God himself, there is enmity enough in the carnal mind to put it in execution. And as man is in arms against God, so is He against man. *He is angry with the wicked every day, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready, he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death.* Psal. 7. 11. God hath set up his royal standard in defiance of all the sons and daughters of apostate Adam, who from his own mouth are proclaimed rebels and traitors to his Crown and dignity; and as against such, he hath taken the field, as with fire and sword to be avenged on them. Yea, he gives the world sufficient testimony of his intended wrath, by that of it which is revealed from heaven daily in the judgements executed upon sinners, and those many but of a span-long, before they can shew what nature they have by actual sin, yet crush'd to death by Gods righteous foot, only for the viperous kind of which they come. At every door where sin sets its foot, there the wrath of God meets us. Every faculty of soul, and member of body, are used as a weapon of unrighteousness against God; so every one hath its portion of wrath, even to the tip of the tongue. As man is sinful all over, so is he cursed all over. Inside and outside, soul and body, write all with woes and curses so close and full, that there is not room for another to interline, or add to what God hath written.

In a word, so fiery is the Lords wrath against sinful man, that all the creatures share with him in it. Though God takes his aim at man, and levels his arrows primarily at his very heart; yet as they go, they flie upon the creature; Gods curse blasts the whole Creation for mans sake; and so he payes him some of his misery from the hand of those creatures which were primitively ordain'd to minister to him in his happy state, yea, contribute some drops to the filling of his Cup. As an enraged Army makes spoil and havock of all in their enemies land, destroyes their provision, stops or poysons their waters, burns up their houses, and lets out his fury on all his hand comes at: Truly, thus God plagues man in every creature, not one escapes his hand. The very bread we eat, water we drink, and air we breath in, are poysoned with the curse of God; of which they who live longest, dye at last. And all these are no more to Hell, than the few files of men in a forlorn to the whole body of an Army; God doth but skirmish with sinners here by some small parties of his judgements sent out, to let them know they have an enemy alive, that observes their motions, takes the alarm their sins give him, and can be too hard for them when he please; but 'tis in Hell where he falls on with his whole power. There sinners shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thel. 1. 9. And so much for the first, that there is a quarrel between God and man. The second follows.

Secondly, The Gospel takes this quarrel up, and only the Gospel; therefore called the Gospel of Peace. This will appear in two particulars. First, The Gospel presents us with the Articles of peace, which God offers graciously to treat upon with the Children of men, and this none but the Gospel doth. Secondly,

the Gospel preacht and publisht, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace thus offer'd. First, of the first.

First, The Gospel presents us with the Articles of peace, which God graciously offers to treat and conclude an inviolable peace upon with rebellious man. In it we have the whole method, which God laid in his own thoughts from eternity of reconciling poor sinners to himself. The Gospel, what is it, but Gods heart in print? The precious promises of the Gospel, what are they, but Heavens Court-rolls, translated into the creatures language? in which are expos'd to the view of our faith, all the counsels and purposes of love and mercy, which were concluded on by Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the recovery of lost man by Jesus Christ, who was sent as Heavens Plenipotentiary to earth, fully empowered and enabled, not only by preaching to treat of a peace as desired on Gods part, to be concluded between God and man, but, by the purchase of his death to procure a peace, and by his Spirit to seal and ratifie the same to all those, who (believing the credential letters which God sent with him in the miracles wrought by him, and especially the testimony which the Scripture gives of him) do by a faith unfeigned receive him into their souls, as their only Lord and Saviour. This is such a notion as is not to be learnt elsewhere. A deep silence we find concerning this in Aristotle and Tully. They cannot tell us how a poor sinner may be at peace with God; nothing of this to be spell'd from the Covenant God made with Adam. That shuts the sinner up in a dark Dungeon of despair; bids him look for nothing, but what the wrath of a just God can measure out to him. Thus the guilty creature is surrounded on every side, as with a deluge of wrath; no hope nor help to be heard of, till the Gospel like a Dove, brings the Olive-branch of peace, and tells him the tyde is turned, and that flood of wrath which was poured on man for his sin, is now fallen into another channel, even upon Christ, who was made a curse for us, and hath not only drunk of the brook that lay in the way, and hindred our passage to God, but hath drunk it off; so that where a Sea was, now appears dry Land, a safe and fair Causeway, called Heb. 10. 20. a living way, by which every truly repenting and believing sinner may pass without any danger, from the justice of God now appeased, into the love and favour of God. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 1. We are entirely beholden to the Gospel for the discovery of this secret, which the Apostle solemnly acknowledgeth, 2 Tim. 1. 10. where Christ is said to bring life and immortality to light by the Gospel. It lay hid in the womb of Gods purpose, till the Gospel arose, and let us into the knowledge of it, as the light of the Sun reveals to the eye what was before, but what could not be seen without its light; and therefore, 'tis not only called a living way, but a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, in the place fore-mentioned; so new, that the heart of man never was acquainted with one thought of it, till the Gospel opens it, according to that of Isa. 42. 16. *I will bring the blind by a way he knew not;*

not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known.

Secondly, The Gospel publish'd and preach'd, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace. Before peace be concluded betwixt God and the creature, both must be agreed; as God to pardon, so the sinner to accept and embrace peace upon Gods own terms; But how shall this be done? The heart of man is so deeply rooted in its enmity against God, that it requires a strength to pluck up this, equal with that which tears up Mountains, and carries Rocks from one place to another. The Gospel preach'd is the instrument which God useth for the effecting of it. Rom. 1. 16. *I am not ashamed* (saith the Apostle there) *of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.* It is the Chariot wherein the Spirit rides victoriously, when he makes his entrance into the heart of man; called therefore *the Ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3. 8. He fashions anew the heart, as he framed the world at first with a word speaking. This is the day of Gods power, wherein he makes his people willing. Power indeed to make those that had the seeds of War sown in their very natures against God, willing to be friends with him. Unheard of power, as if the beating of a Drum should carry such a charm along with its sound, to make those on the enemies side upon the hearing of it, to throw down their Arms, and seek peace at his hand, against whom they even now took the field with great rage and fury; such a secret power accompanies the Gospel. It strikes many times not only the sinners Sword out of his hand, while it is stretched out against God; but the enmity out of his heart, and brings the stoutest Rebel upon his knee, humbly to crave the benefit of the articles of peace publish'd in the Gospel. It makes sinners so pliant and tractable to the call of God in the Gospel, that they on a sudden, (upon the hearing of a Gospel-Sermon) forget their own natural affections, which they have had to their beloved lusts, and leap out of their embraces with indignation, lest they should keep God and them at odds one moment longer. Now follows the third.

Quest. 3. Why doth God convey his peace of reconciliation by this Channel unto the sons of men? Or in plainer terms, Why doth God choose to reconcile poor sinners to himself by Christ? For this is the peace which the Gospel proclaims, Col. 1. 20. *And having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself;* And verſ. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works; yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight.*

Anſw. They are too bold with God, who say, That he could not find out another way; who can tell that, except God himself had told him so? Alas, how unmeet is the short line of our created understanding for such a daring attempt, as to fathom the unsearchableness of Gods omnipotent Wisdom? To determine what God can, and what

he cannot do? But we may say (and not forget to revere the Majesty of Heaven) That the Wisdom of God could not have laid the method of salvation more advantageous to the exalting of his own glorious Name, and his poor creatures happiness, than in this expedient of reconciling them to himself by Christ our great Peace-maker. This transaction hath in it a happy temperament, to solve all the difficulties on either hand; and for its mysterious contrivance, exceeds the workmanship which God put forth in making this exterior World (though, that in its kind perfect, and so glorious, that the least creature tells its Maker to be a Deity, and puts the Atheist to shame in his own Conscience that will not believe so) yet I say, it exceeds this goodly frame of Heaven and Earth, as far as the Watch it self, doth the Case which covers it. Indeed, God intended by this way of reconciling poor sinners to himself, to make work for Angels and Saints to admire the mysterie of his Wisdom, power and love therein to everlasting. O when they shall all meet together in Heaven, and there have the whole counsel of God unfolded to them; when they shall behold what Seas were dryed up, and what Rocks of creature-impossibilities digged through by the omnipotent Wisdom and Love of God, before a sinners peace could be obtained, and then behold the work (notwithstanding all this) to be effected and brought to a happy perfection: O how will they be swallowed up in adoring the abyss of his Wisdom, who laid the platform of all this according to the eternal counsel of his own Will; Surely, the Sun doth not so much exceed the strength of our mortal eyes, as the glory of this will their understandings from ever fully comprehending it. This, this is the piece which God drew on purpose (for its rare workmanship) to beautifie Heaven it self withal; when Christ return'd to Heaven, he carried none of this Worlds rarities with him; nor in Silver and Gold; not Crowns and Diadems, which here men venture their lives, yea, part with their souls so prodigally for. Alas, what are these, and the whole pride and gallantry of this World to Heaven? That which it glories most of, is Heaven no better, than the Beggars dish and scraps do a Princes Table; or the patch'd tatter'd Coat of the one, the Wardrobe of the other. No, the Lord Christ came on a higher design than this to earth: The enterprize he undertook to achieve, was to negotiate, yea, effect a peace betwixt God and his rebel-creature man, that had by his Revolt incurr'd his just wrath and vengeance: This was a work that became God himself so well to engage in, that he thought none high and worthy enough to be trusted with the transacting of it beneath his only Son, who staid here but while he had brought his negotiation to a happy period; and then carried the joyful tydings of it being finished back with him to Heaven, which made his return infinitely welcome to his Father, and all the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven his attendants.

C H A P. IV.

A more particular Account why God reconciled sinners to himself by Christ.

But I shall proceed to give some more particular answer to the question propounded.

S E C T. I.

First, God lays this method of reconciling sinners to himself by Christ, that he might give the deepest testimony of his perfect hatred to sin in that very act, wherein he expresseth the highest love and mercy to sinners. No act of mercy and love, like that of pardoning sin. To receive a reconciled sinner into Heaven, is not so great an advance, as to take a Rebel into a state of favour and reconciliation. The terms here are infinitely wider; there is reason to expect the one, none to look for the other. It is pure mercy to pardon, but truth being pardoned to save. Well, when God puts forth this very act, he will have the creature see his hatred to sin, writ upon the face of that love he shews to the sinner. And truly this was but needful, if we consider, how hard it is for our corrupt hearts to conceive of Gods mercy without some dishonourable reflection upon his holiness. *I keep silence (saith God) Psal. 50.* And what inference doth the wicked draw from thence? *Thou thoughtst I was altogether such a one as thy self;* that is, thou thoughtst I lik't sin as well as thy self. Now, if so plain and easie a Text as Gods forbearing mercy be wrested; and a false gloss so repugnant, not only to the end of God therein, but to the holy nature of God; how much more subject is forgiving mercy (that is so far superlative to that, and infinitely more luscious to the sinners palate) to be abused? Some men gaze so long on this pleasing Object, that they are not willing to look off, and see any other attribute in God. Now, in this way of reconciling himself to sinners by Christ, he hath given such an Argument to convince sinners, that he is an implacable hater of sin, as hath not its Fellow. 'Tis true, every threat in the Bible tells us, that sin finds no favour in Gods heart; the guilty consciences of men, that hunt them home, and follow them into their own bosoms, continually yelling and crying damnation in their ears; the remarkable judgments, which now and then take hold of sinners in this World, and much more the furnace which is heating for them in another World, shew abundantly, how hot and burning Gods heart within him is in wrath against sin. But when we see him run upon his Son, and lay the envenomed Knife of his wrath to his throat, yea, thrust it into his very heart, and there let it stick for all the supplications and prayers, which in his bitter agonies he offered up to his Father with strong crying and tears, without the least sparing of him, till he had forced his life (in a throng of sad groans and sighs) out of his body, and therewith paid justice the full debt, which he had as mans surety undertook to discharge. This, this (I say) doth give us a greater advantage to

conceive of Gods hatred to sin, than if we could stand in a place, to see what entertainment the damned find in Hell, and at once behold all the torments they endure. Alas, their backs are not broad enough to bear the whole weight of Gods wrath at once, it being infinite, and they finite; which if they could, we should not find them lying in that Prison for non-payment. But behold one here, who had the whole curse of sin at once upon his back. Indeed, their sufferings are infinite, *extensive*, because everlasting; but his were infinite, *intensive*; he paid in one sum, what they shall be ever paying, and yet never come to the last farthing. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isa. 53. 5. He hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, ver. 6.* Or, he hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in him; the whole curse met in him, as all streams do in the Sea. A veruall collection of all the threatnings denounced against sin, and all laid on him. And now, take but one step more, and consider in how near relation Christ stood in to God, as also the infinite and unspeakable love with which it was filled, and mutually endeared on each hand, and this at the very same time, when he ascended the stage for this bloody tragedy to be acted on him in: And I think that you are at the highest stair the Word of God can lead you, to ascend by into the meditation of this Subject. Should you see a father that has but one only son, and can have no more, make him his Mirtimus to Prison, come into Court himself, and sit Judge upon his life, with his own lips pass sentence of death upon him, and order that it be executed with the most exquisite torments that may be; yea, go to the place himself, and with his own eyes, and those not full of water, as mourning for his death, but full of fire and fury; yea, a countenance every way so set, as might tell all that see it, the man took pleasure in his childs death; You would say, Surely he bitterly hates his son, or the sin his son hath committed. This you see in God the Father towards his Son; It was he more than men or Devils, that procured his death. Christ took notice of this, that the Warrant for his death, had his Fathers hand and seal to it; *Shall I not drink of the Cup my Father gives me?* Yea, he stands by and rejoyceth in it; his blood was the wine that made glad the heart of God; *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, Isa. 53. 10.*

When God corrects a Saint, he doth it in a manner unwillingly; but when Christ suffers, it pleaseth him; and not this from want of love in his heart to Christ, nor that any disobedience in Christ had hardened his Fathers heart against him; for he never displeased him; but from the hatred he had to sin, and zeal to exalt his mercy towards sinners, by satisfying his justice on his Son.

S E C T. II.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, He effected our peace by Christ, that he might for ever hide pride from his Saints eyes. Pride was the stone on which both Angels and man stumbled and fell. In mans recovery therefore he'll roll that stone as far as may be out of the way; he'll lay that knife aside with which man did himself the mischief. And that he may do this, he transacts the whole business by Christ for them. Mans project, was to cut off the entail of his obedience to God, and set up for himself, as a free and absolute Prince, without holding upon his Maker; a strange plot! for to effect this, he must first have thrown away that being which God gave him, and by a self-creation (if such a thing had been possible) have bestowed a new one upon himself; then indeed, and not till then, he might have had his will. But alas, his pride to be what he could not, lost him what he had, and still might have enjoyed; yet how foolish soever it now appears, and infeasible, that was the plot pride had sprung in mans heart. Now God to preserve his children from all future assaults and batteries of Hell at this door, chose such a way of reconciling and saving them; that when the Prince of the World comes to tempt them to pride, he should find nothing in them to give the least countenance or colour to such a motion; so that of all sins, pride is such a one, as we may wonder how it should grow; for it hath no other root to bear it up, but what is found in mans dreaming fancy and imagination. It grows, as sometimes we shall see a Mushroom, or Moss among stones, where little or no soil is for its root to take hold of. God in this Gospel-way of reconciling sinners by Christ, makes him fetch all from without doors. Wilt thou poor soul have peace with God? thou must not have it from thine own pittance for thy sins. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him*, Isa. 53. 5. O know thou art not thy own peace-maker. That's Christs name, who did that work, Eph. 2. 14. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, Jew and Gentile, one with God, and one with one another.* Wouldst thou be righteous? then thou must not appear before God in thy own cloaths; 'tis anothers righteousness, not thy own, that is provided for thee; *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness*, Isa. 45. 24. In a word, wouldst thou ever have a right in heavens glory? thy penny is not good silver to purchase it with; the price must not come out of thy purse, but Christs heart; and therefore as it is called the *purchased possession*, in regard of Christ; because he obtained it for us with a great sum, not silver and gold, but his precious blood; so an *inheritance*, in regard of us, because it descends upon us as freely as the fathers estate on his child, Eph. 1. 14. And why all this? but that the lofty looks of man may be humbled, and the haughtiness of man should be bowed down, and the Lord alone exalted in the day of our salvation. The *Manna* is expounded by Christ himself to be a type of him, Joh. 6. 32. *The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.* Now observe, where-

fore God chose that way of feeding them in the wilderness, Deut. 8. 16. *Who fed thee in the wilderness with Manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee.* But wherein lay this great humbling of them? Were they not shrewdly humbled think you, to be fed with a dainty dish, which had God for its Cook, and is called *Angels food* for its delicacy? *Psal. 78. 25.* Such, that if they needed any repast, might well suit their table? I answer, it was not the meanness of the fare, but the manner of having it, which God intended should humble them. Man is proud, and loves to be his own provider, and not stand to anothers allowance; the same feast sent in by the charity and bounty of another, will not go down so well with his high stomach, as when 'tis provided at his own cost and charges: he had rather have the honour of keeping his own house, though mean, than to live higher upon the alms and allowance of anothers charity: this made them wish themselves at their Onions in their own Gardens in Egypt, and Flesh-pots there; which (though they were grosser diet) liked them better, because bought with their own penny.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, That it might be a peace with the greatest advantage possible; that God and man might meet again on better terms by this pacification, than when *Adam* stood in all his primitive glory. God no doubt, would not have set the beauty of his first workmanship to be so defaced by sin, had he not meant to have rear'd a more magnificent structure out of its ruins. Now God intending to print mans happiness in the second edition with a fairer character than at the first, he employs Christ in the work, as the only fit instrument to accomplish so great a design. Christ himself tells us as much, Joh. 10. 10. *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly:* His coming was not to give those who were dead and damned, bare peace, naked life, but more abundantly, than ever man had them before the breach. It was Christ in the second Temple, who fill'd it with a glory superlative to the first: Christ in the second creation of man, that lifts his head above his first state in happiness. As *Adam* was a pattern to all his seed, what he was in his innocent state, that should they all have been (if sin had not altered the scene, and turned the Tables;) so Christ is a pattern to all his seed of that glory which they shall be clothed with; 1 Joh. 3. 2. *We are now the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, when he appears, we shall be like him, that is, our vile bodies like his glorious body, as the Apostle hath it, Phil. 3. and our souls also like his glorious soul.* Now by how much our nature in Christ is more glorious than it was in *Adam*, by so much the state of a reconciled sinner surpasseth *Adam's* first condition. Some little discovery whereof, take in two particulars. First, The reconciled sinner hath the advantage of *Adam* in his union to God: Secondly, In his communion with God.

First, In his union to God. And that,

First,

First, as it is nearer; Secondly, as it is stronger, First, it is nearer; because God and man make one person in Christ; this is such a mystery, as was not heard of by Adam in all his glory, he indeed was in league of love and friendship with God, and that was the best flower in his Crown; but he could lay no claim to such kindred and consanguinity, as now (with reverence be it spoken) the reconciled soul can with God; this comes in by the marriage of the divine nature with the humane, in the person of Christ, which personal union, is the foundation of another, a mystical union betwixt Christ and the person of every believer; and this is so near an union, that as by the union of the divine nature and humane, there is one person; so also by this mystical union, the Saints and their head make one Christ, For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being members, are an body; so also is Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12. Ecclesia est Christus explicatus; the Church is nothing but Christ displayed: who can speak what an advance this is to the humane nature in general, and to the persons of believers in especial? such a one, as it leaves not only Adam, but Angels beneath a reconciled sinner in this respect. Adam at first was made but little lower than the Angels, but by this pair of unions, God hath set the reconciled soul more than a little above them both; for Christ by taking on him not the nature of Angels, (though the more ancient and noble house) but the seed of Abraham, made the elder serve the younger, even Angels themselves minister to the meanest Saint, as unto their Masters heir, Heb. 1. 14.

Secondly, As the union is nearer, so it is stronger; therefore stronger, because nearer; the closer stones stand together, the stronger the building. The union betwixt God and Adam in the first Covenant was not so near, but Adam might fall, and yet Gods glory stands entire and unhaken; but the union now is so close and strong betwixt Christ and his Saints, that Christ cannot be Christ without his members; Because I live (saith Christ) ye shall live also, Job. 14. 19. implying that their life was bound up in his, and it was as easie for him to be turned out of heaven, as for them to be kept out, Eph. 1. 23. The Church is called there Christs body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. A body is not full, if it hath not every member and joynt, though never so little, and them in their fulness too. The Saints grace is Christs glory, 2 Cor. 8. 23. and though an essential glory as God, receives no filling from his Saints or their graces, yet consider him in his Mediatorship, as head of his Church; so Christs glory is daily filling, as the Elect are called in daily, and as those that are called in, grow up to their appointed stature. Christ hath not his fulness, till the Saints have their perfection and complement of grace in heavens glory.

Secondly, In his communion with God; the nearer (we use to say) the dearer; communion results from union; if the union be nearer and stronger between a reconciled soul and God, than Adams was, his communion must needs be sweeter and fuller. Why else is the communion of husband

and wife fuller, than of friend and friend? but because the union is closer. God converseth with Adam, as a friend with his friend, and allie; but with the reconciled soul, as a husband with his wife. Thy Maker is thy husband, Isa. 44. 5.

There is a double sweetness peculiar to the reconciled sinners communion with God.

First, There is in Christ a foundation laid for greater familiarity with God, than Adam was at first capable of. He indeed was the Son of God, yet he was kept at a farther distance, and treated with more state and Majesty from God, than now the reconciled soul is; for though he was the Son of God by Creation, yet the Son of God was not then the son of man by Incarnation; and at this door comes in the believers sweetest familiarity with God: the Christian cannot lift up now an eye of faith to God, but he sees his own nature standing upon the Throne by him in the person of Christ. And if the sight of Joseph at Pharaoh's right hand, in Court-favour and honour, sent the Patriarchs home with such joyful news to their aged Father; what a ravishing message of joy must faith carry then to the soul of a reconciled sinner, when it comes in (after some vision of love in an Ordinance) and saith, Cheer up (O my soul) I see Jesus Christ thy near kinsman, at Gods right hand in glory, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; fear not, he is so nigh in blood to thee, that he cannot be unmindful of thee, except he should do what were unnatural in it self, that is, hide himself from his own flesh. The lower a Prince stoops to the meanest of his subjects, the more familiar he makes himself to his subjects. It was a wonderful condescendence in the great God, (who can have no compeer) first to make man, and then strike so friendly a league and covenant with him. This God doth now with every reconciled soul, and that enrich'd with so many astonishing circumstances of condescending grace, as must needs speak the way of the believers access to God more familiar. God doth in this second and new alliance with his poor creature, descend his Throne, exchange his Majestick Robes of glory, for the rags of mans frail flesh; he leaves his Palace to live for a time in his creatures humble Cottage, and there not only familiarly converses with him, but (which is stranger) ministers to him, yea, which is more than all these, he surrenders himself up to endure all manner of indignities from his sorry creatures hand. And when this his course entertainment is done, back he posts to heaven, not to complain to his Father, how he hath been abused here below, and raise heavens power against those that had so ill entreated him; but to make ready heavens Palace for the reception of those who had thus abused him, and now will but accept of his grace: And lest these, yet left on earth, should fear his re-assumed Royalty and Majesty in heavens glory, would make some alteration with their affairs in his heart; to give them therefore a constant demonstration, that he would be the same in the height of his honour, that he was in the depth of his abasement, he goes back in the same cloaths he had borrowed of their nature, to wear them on the Throne

Joseph and Jacob

Union with Christ

1811

Throne in all his glory (only some Princely coat bestowed, to put them into the fashion of that heavenly Kingdom, and make them suit with his glorified state) giving them a pattern by this, what their own vile bodies (which are now so dishonourable) shall be made another day. Now none of all those circumstances were found in Gods first administration to *Adam*, and therefore the more familiar.

Note Secondly, There is the sweetness of pardoning mercy, and the bleeding love of Christ, (who by his death purchased it for him) to be tasted in the reconciled souls communion with God. This lump of sugar *Adam* had not in his cup. He knew what the love of a giving God meant, but was stranger to the mercy of a forgiving God. The reconciled soul experiments both. The love of a father (more than ordinary kind) is a great comfort to a dutiful child, one that never displeased his father: But it carries no such wonder in it to our thoughts, as the compassion and melting bowels of a father towards

a rebellious child doth; and certainly the prodigal child that is received again into his fathers embrace hath the advantage for loving his father, more than his brother that never came under his fathers pleasure. O this pardoning mercy, and the love of Christ that procured it; they are the most precious and fruitful heads for a gracious soul to enter his sweetest meditations upon here on earth; who can conceive what ravishing musick glorious Saints will make in running divison on this sweet note? I am sure the song their Harps are tuned unto, is the *song of the Lamb*, Rev. 15. 2, 3. The Saints finished happiness in heavens glory, is a composition of all the rare ingredients possible, so tempered by the wise hand of God, that as none could well be spared, so not the taste of any one shall be lost in another; but this of pardoning mercy, and the stupendious love and wisdom of God through Christ therein, shall, as I may so say, give a sweet relish to all, and be tasted above all the rest.

CHAP. V.

An Exhortation to embrace the peace of Reconciliation, offer'd in the Gospel.

Use 1. **L**ET it provoke every one to labour to get an interest in this peace of *Reconciliation* with God, which the Gospel brings. Peace with God? sure 'tis worth the sinners having. Or else the Angels were ill employed, when they welcomed the tidings thereof into the world at our Saviours birth with such acclamations of joy. *Glory to God, we arch Angels, Luke 2. 14.* yea, Christ himself was deceived in his purchase; who if a sinners peace with God be not of high price and value, hath little to shew for the effusion of his heart-blood, which he thought well spent to gain this. But this we cannot believe: And yet to see how freely God offers peace and pardon to the sons of men through Christ, and how easy, yea, sudden and cross they are to the man; one that does not well know them both, (Gods infinite goodness, and wretched mans horrible baseness) might be ready to think it some low-priced ware which lay upon Gods hands; and this to be the cause why God is so earnest to put it off, and man so loth to take it off his hands. Ah poor deluded wretches! who is the wicked Counsellor that hardens your hearts from embracing your own mercies? None sure but a Devil can hate God and you so much. And hath he sped so well in his own quarrel against God, that he should be hearken'd to by thee, poor sinner? Can he give thee armour that will quench Gods bullets? how then is it that he is so unkind to himself, as to let them lie burning in his own bosom to his unspeakable torment? or will he lend thee any pity, when thou hast by his advice undone thy self? alas! no more than the cruel wolf doth the silly sheep, when he hath suck'd her blood, and torn her in pieces. Think and think again poor sinner, what answer thou meanest

to send to heaven, before God calls his Ambassadors home, and the treaty break up never to be renewed again. And that thou mayest not want some reasonable matter for thy musing thoughts to employ upon on this subject, let me desire thee to treat thy own heart upon these four heads.

First, Consider What it is that stands before thee in offer.

Secondly, Who it is that offers it.

Thirdly, How he offers it.

Fourthly, What thou dost when thou refusest.

SECT. I.

First, Consider What it is that is offered thee, *Peace with God*. A thing so indispensable, thou canst not have less; and so comprehensive, thou need'st have no more than this, and what comes with it to make thee truly, fully happy; of all variety of enjoyments with which 'tis possible a table can be spread, this is a dish can least be taken away, take away peace, and that but of an inferior (outward peace) and the feast is spoiled, though be on a Princes table. *David's* Children had no stomach to their royal dinner, when one of them was slain that sat at the board with them. And what taste can you have in all your junkets, while God is in array against you, many sinners slain before your eye by Gods judgements, and the sword that hath let out their blood, at thy throat while the meat is in thy mouth? Methinks your sweet morsels should stick in your throat, and hardly get down, while you muse on these things. O sinner! is not this as a road swelling at the bottom of thy most sweetly sugar'd cup, that the controversy

depends betwixt God and thee; thy sins are pardoned, and thou a dead damned creature, wouldst thou frolicquest it for the present in thy pride, would you not wonder to see a man at his hunting or hawking, and one should tell you a man is to be hanged to morrow? Truly God is more merciful to thee than thou canst promise thyself. He stay the execution till another day. I cannot when I meet a man, whose life proclaims him an unconquered sinner, and see him spruce up himself in fine cloaths, entertain himself with the joy of his children, estate, honour, or the like, in this life; it is a matter of admiration to me, what such a man thinks of God or himself. Canst thou think that thou shalt sit at this fire of thorns thou hast kindled, and not God fire thee? Must it needs prove a creditor to see his debtor live high, and go home all at his cost, and all the while never think of getting out of his debt, or make his peace with him? Much more doth it God, to see sinners spend his bounty, lead joyful jovial lives in the abundance of outward enjoyments he lends them; but when a thought of making peace with him, in whose debt they are so deep in arrears. What folly has been for the Jews, when *Abasherm* had the warrant for their destruction, to have them paint their houses, plant their fields, and let out their hearts in the enjoyment of their pleasures, without taking care in the first place of getting that bloody decree reversed? a worse sort art thou that dost all these, while thou carriest the sentence of death from Gods mouth about thee in thy conscience. Sir *Thomas Moor*, when in the stocks, would not so much as trim himself, saying, *There was a controversy betwixt the King and him, and he was the loser; and till that was at a happy end, he would be at no cost about it*: Scum but off the froth of sin, and you may make a solemn use of it. Certainly, all the cost you bestow on your selves, to make your lives pleasurable and joyous to you, is most folly, till it be decided what will become of the soul betwixt God and you, not for your heads, but souls, yea, soul and body, whether for heaven or hell. O were it not thy wisest course to begin by making thy peace, and then thou mayest soon have a happy life. We say, *He that gets out of debt, gets rich*. I am sure the reconciled soul cannot be poor. As soon as the peace is concluded, a trade is open'd betwixt God and the soul. If thou art pardoned, thou mayest then sail to any port that lies in Gods Dominions, and be welcome; the promises stand open with their rich treasure; the poor soul full lading in of all the precious things that are offered, even as much as thy faith can bear, and none shall hinder thee. As a man may draw the wine of a whole vessel through one tap; so thou may draw the comfort of all the Covenant out of this one promise of Reconciliation. If reconciled, then the door is open to let thee into communion with God in all his Ordinances. God and thou being agreed, may now walk together; whereas before thou couldst not look into Gods presence, but his heart rose against thee, as one in the sight of his enemy, ready to draw upon thee

with his judgements. *The Smith* (we say) *and his penny, both are black*; so wert thou with all thy duties and performances, while unreconciled in his eye; but now *thy voice is sweet, and countenance comely*. All the attributes of God (thy ally) are thine; *his horses and chariots are shine*, as *Jehoshaphat* told *Abah*; when ever any enemy puts thee in fear, you know where to have a friend that will take part with thee; all his providences, though like Bees, they flie some this way, and some that, yea, one contrary to another, as thou thinkest impossible to trace them; yet they are all at work for thee, and thy soul is the hive wherein they will unlade the sweet fruit of all their labour, though possibly it may be night, the evening of thy days before thou findest it. In a word, if reconciled, thou standest next to heaven; *whom he justifies, whom he glorifies*, Rom. 8. 30. thou art sure to be there, as soon as death rends the veil of thy flesh, which is all that interposeth between thee and it.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Consider who it is that offers peace to thee, the great God; and 'tis hard to say which speaks the greatest wonder; for God to offer, or thee to deny what he offers. We marvel not to see the undutiful child on his knee, labouring to soften his fathers heart with his tears, which he hath hardened against him with his rebellions; nor a condemned traitor prostrate at his Princes foot, begging for his life, now forfeited to the justice of the Law; but 'tis something strange, to see the father become suppliant to his child; more for the traitor to open his dungeon door, and find his Prince standing there, and that upon no other errand, than to desire him to accept of a pardon. And yet self-love may be the great motive, for this seeming self-denial. The parent doth but love himself, when he steps below his place to gain his child, that carries so much of its parents life about him. And such necessity of state there is sometimes, that great Princes are forced to stoop to the meanest, yea, worst of their subjects. A Princes safety may be so intimately concern'd in a traitors life, that he cannot cut off his head, without eminent danger to the Crown that stands upon his own. But none of these straits forced God to take up thoughts of peace to his poor creature; no, they are the birth of free condescending love; and now think again sinner, before the great God hath a denial from thee, if a neighbour, the poorest in the Town, and he one that hath done thee wrong, and not received it from thee, comes to thee, and desires peace, shouldst thou reject the motion? would not thy conscience reproach thee to thy dying-day? how then wilt thou endure to look God or conscience in the face, if thou refusest peace at a Gods hands? that doth not treat like men, when their Sword is broke, and they cannot fight; but when he hath absolute power over thy life, (which is ever in his hands) yea, a God that hath received the wrong, and never did thee any; yea, should have done thee none, if he had long before this hang'd thee up in chains of darkness among the damned.

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SECT.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Consider how God offers thee peace.

First, He doth it sincerely, he covers not fraud under a treaty of peace. Among men there hath been horrible juggling in this case. The flag of peace is oft hung out at lip, only to draw them within the reach of their dagger, which is ready to smite them, as *Joab* did *Abner* under the fifth rib. In all the Civil Wars of *France*, the poor Protestants found Peace more costly to them than War; they beat the Papists in the field, when open enemies, but were betrayed by them in the chamber, when false friends. But for thy comfort know, 'tis a God of truth thou treatest with; never did he shed the blood of War in peace; or give a soul to the sword of his wrath, after quarter taken, and peace given; *If we confess he is just and faithful to forgive*; his promises are not yea and nay, like the Devils, who lays them so, that he may have the credit both ways. No, the very heart of God may be seen as through a crystal window in the promise; *they are all Tea and Amen in Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

Secondly, He offers peace affectionately; his heart deeply engaged in the tenders of mercy to poor sinners, which will appear,

First, In his contriving a way for reconciling sinners to himself. What men strongly desire, they stretch their wits to the utmost how to accomplish, *The liberal man deviseth liberal things*, Isa. 32. 8. It shews the heart exceeding large in charity, when a man shall sit down, and study how he may find out ways for the exercise of his charity: whereas most men, alas, beat their brains, how they may save their purses, and scape with giving as little as may be to the poor. O what a rare invention hath God found out for shewing mercy? which hath so many mysterious passages in it, that Angels themselves are put hither to School, that by studying this mystery of Gods reconciling sinners to himself by Christ, they might know the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. 3. 10.

Secondly, By the early discovery he made of this to the sons of men. That Prince might well be admired for his merciful heart, (if any History could shew such a one ever to have swayed Scepter in the world, which I think it cannot) who, upon some horrid treason plotted against his Crown and Royal person, and that by one obliged to him with the highest favours possible, could yet not only find in his heart to pardon the Rebel, but also stoop so far, as to be himself the messenger that should carry the news of this his gracious purpose to the traitor in prison, before ever he relented, or had it in his thought to sue for his mercy, and this the same day in which the villanous attempt was made, that the poor wretch might not languish so much as one night under the horror of his despairing thoughts; certainly such a Prince would pass for a non-such in mercy among the sons of men. How then must our thoughts be quite swallowed up into an admiration of this stupendous act of mercy, which the great God expressed to fall'n man, wherein he did all this

for his Rebel creature? for no sooner had man the peace, and taken up rebellious arms against his Maker, but the Lords heart relented towards him, and could not let the Sin go down in his sight against him, but must in the very same day relented, let him hear of a Saviour, by preaching to him, *in the seed of the woman*, Gen. 3. 15. did *Adam* think God had such a message in his mouth for him, when he first heard him come towards him, and for fear ran his head into a bush, dreading a flight from him, if he had known what to have gone. O that *Adam* where he was founded no doubt in his guilty ears, like the voice of an avenging God, calling him a malefactor to execution: but it proved the voice of a gracious God coming, not to meet man in his way returning to him; but to seek him out, who had his thoughts of him, that might give some comfort to his own gracious heart, now full of mercy to that poor creature, by disclosing to him the purpose of grace which he had there conceived towards him. Surely his heart was very full, or else this word would have burst out so soon.

Thirdly, The great Ordinance of the Gospel ministry, which God hath set up in the Church, for purpose to treat with sinners upon a peace, sheweth his deep affection to the work. One would think it had been enough to print his thoughts and purposes of mercy in the Scripture, that he had done no more. Princes, when they put a Statute or a Law, expect all their Subjects to enquire after it; and do not send one to the Town, whose office shall be to give notice of it, and perswade people to submit to it; yet the great God doth; the Ministers work from year to year, of the year to the other, what is it but to seek sinners to be reconciled to God? And in this they serve,

First, The persons he sends to preach. Not Angels, foreigners to our nature; who though they love us well, yet are not so intimately concerned with us, as to give them the advantage of pressing with those melting bowels, that God would have them filled with, who go on this errand. No, he sends men, with whom we may converse familiarly, creatures of like passions; whose nature puts them under the same depravation, temptation, condemnation, with our selves; who can from the acquaintance they have with their own hearts, tell us the baseness of ours; from the fire of Gods wrath which hath scorcht them for their sins, tell us the desert of ours, and danger we are in by reason of them; as also from the sweet sense that the love of Gods love in Christ hath left on their souls, commend the cheer and feast they invite us to, by their own knowledge. Did not God, think you, desire good speed to his Embassage, when he chose such to carry it?

Secondly, Observe the qualifications required in those he employs as Embassadors to offer peace to sinners, 2 Tim. 2. 24. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* O how careful is God, that nothing should be in the Preacher

Gods
mercy
to Adam

to prejudice the sinners judgement, or harden his heart against the offer of his grace? If the servant be proud and haughty, how shall they know the Master meek and patient? God would have them do nothing to make the breach wider, or hinder a happy close betwixt him and them. Indeed he that will take the bird, must not scare it. A froward peevish messenger is no friend to him that sends him. Sinners are not pelted into Christ with stones of hard provoking language; but wooed into Christ by heart-melting exhortations.

Thirdly, Look into the commission God gives the Ambassadors, and still his heart appears in the message. Whether you consider the largeness of it on the one hand, or the strictness of it on the other.

First, the largeness of it, *Go and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Make no difference, rich or poor; great sinners or little, old or young; offer peace to all that will but believe, bid as many come as will, here's for all that come. Again, the strictness of it on the other hand. O what a solemn charge have we in delivering their message faithfully? *Paul trembles at the thoughts of loitering: Wo unto me that tarryeth.* What an argument doth Christ use (which is from his very heart) to persuade Peter to come: *If thou lovest me, feed my sheep.* As if he had said, Peter, thou now art in tears for thy weakness in denying me, thou hast yet one way to recover all that unkindness to demonstrate thy love to me, and that is by feeding my sheep: do this, and I will not thy self for that. Christ shews more love to his sheep, than of himself.

Secondly, The joy God expresseth when poor sinners come in to the offer of peace. Joy is the best testimony can be given to our complacency in any thing or person; love or joy is as fuel to the fire. If love lay little fuel of desires on the heart, the flame of joy that comes thence, will not be great. Now Gods joy is great in pardoning poor sinners that come in; therefore his affection great in the offer thereof. It is made the very motive that prevails with God to pardon sinners, *Because he delighteth in mercy,* Micah 7. 18. *Who is a God that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, for he delighteth in mercy.* God doth all this, *because he delighteth in mercy.* Ask why the Fisher stands all night with his Angle in the River; he'll tell you, because he delights in the sport. Well, you now know the reason why God stands so long waiting on sinners, months, years, preaching to them; 'tis that he may be gracious in pardoning them, and in that act delight himself. Princes very often pardon traytors, to please others more than themselves, or else it would never be done; but God doth it chiefly to delight and glad his own merciful heart. Hence the business Christ came about (which was no other but to reconcile sinners to God) 'tis called *the pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. 53. 10. The Lord takes such joy and pleasure in this, that whereas other fathers (who love to their children sinks infinitely beneath any comparison with the love of God to Christ)

mourn at the death of their children, (and most of all when violent and bloody) God he takes content in his Sons death; yea, had the chief hand in procuring of it; and that with infinite complacency; *It pleased the Lord to bruise him;* and what joy could God take in his Sons death, but as it made way for him and his poor creatures that were fallen out, and at open war one against another, to fall in again by a happy accord? And now speak O sinner, if God doth so affectionately desire to be reconciled with thee, doth it not much more behove thee to embrace the peace, than it doth him to offer it?

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, There is but one thing more I would desire thee sinner to consider, and then I leave thee to thy own choice. Consider what thou doest, when thou refusest peace with God. Determinations of war or peace, use to be the result of the most grave counsels and mature deliberation possible. Think and think again, what thou doest, before thou breakest off the treaty of peace, lest thou makest work for repentance, when it will be bootless. But lest thou shouldst not be so faithful to God and thy own soul, as to give thy conscience liberty to speak freely in this matter, I shall do it for thee, and tell thee what thou doest when thou rejectest peace. Thou justifiest thy former hostilities against God, and declarest that thou wilt vouch what thou hast done, let God right himself as well as he can. He that refuseth a pardon, either denieth he hath done wrong, or which is worse, stands to defend it; thou hadst as good say, thou desirest not to be friends with God, but hast a mind to perpetuate the feud betwixt God and thee; like *Amilear*, who was such an enemy to *Rome*, that when he died, he made his son *Hannibal* heir to his hatred against them. It is not enough thou hast fought so many battels on earth against thy Maker, but wilt thou keep the quarrel up in another world also, where there is no more possibility to put an end to it, than to eternity it self? thou throwest the greatest scorn upon God, that 'tis possible for a creature to do; as if Gods love and hatred were such inconsiderable things, that they need not, when cast into the scale of thy thoughts, preponderate thee either way, the one to move thy desire, or the other thy fear. In a word, thou consentest to thy own damnation, and desperately flingest thy self into the mouth of Gods flaming wrath, which gapes in the threatening upon thee. God is under an oath to procure thy destruction, if thou diest in this mind, which God forbid. Death is the trap-door which will let thee down to hells dungeon, and when once thou art there, thou art where thou wilt have space enough to weep over thy past folly; though here thou hast neither time nor leisure to make God thy friend. The very thoughts of those offers of peace which once thou hadst, (but no heart to embrace them) will be like so much salt and vinegar, with which thy accusing conscience will be continually basting thee, as thou liest roaring in hell-fire, to make thy torment the more intolerable. I know this language

grates in the sinners ears, but not so ill as the gnashing of the sinners own teeth will in hell. I have read of a foolish (I may say cruel) Law among the *Lacedemonians*, that none should tell his neighbour any ill news befallen him; but every one should be left in process of time to find it out themselves. Many among us I think would be content, if there were such a Law, that might tie up Ministers mouths from scaring them with their sins, and the miseries that attend their unreconciled state: the most are more careful to run from the discourse of their misery, than to get out of the danger of it; are more ended with the talk of hell, than troubled for that

sinful state, that shall bring them thither. But when then shall we shew our love to the poor sinners, if not now? Seeing that in hell there remain no more offices of love to be done for them. Hell is a pest-house, that we may not write so much on the door of it, as, *Lord have mercy on them* that are in it; nay, they who now pray for their salvation, and weep over their condition, must then vote for their damnation, and rejoyce in it, though they be their own fathers, husbands, wives they see there. O now bethink your selves before the heart of God and man be hard against you.

C H A P. VI.

Four Directions by way of Counsel to sinners, yet in an unreconciled state how they may be at peace with God.

Quest. BUT how may a poor sinner be at peace with God?

Counsel to Sinners

S E C T. I.

Ans. First, See and be sensible of the feud and enmity that at present stands betwixt God and thee.

First, As to the reality of the thing, that there is indeed a quarrel which God hath against thee where-ever thou goest, an angry God is at thy back, and his wrath like a big-bellied cloud hangs full of curses over thy head ready every moment to empty them upon thy head. There is need of pressing this; for though 'tis ordinary for men to confess themselves sinners; yet most are loth to disparage their state so far, as to rank themselves among the enemies of God; no, they hope God and they are good friends for all this. Like thieves, they will confess some little matter, but they will have a care of letting fall any thing that may hazard their necks; *sinner* is a favourable word; who lives and sins not? that they will grant; but to be in a state of enmity, and under the wrath of God; this scares them too much, and brings them too near the sight of the gallows, the seat of hell, which are due to that state; and therefore when pressed thus far, as the Jews desired *Rabshakeh* (when he scar'd them with the dreadful things that would befall them, if they stood out against the King his Master) that he would not speak in the Jews language in the hearing of the people, *Isa. 36. 11.* (for fear of affrighting them) but in a foreign tongue: So sinners desire those that deal plainly with them, that they would not speak so broad in the hearing of their conscience, which they are afraid should know the worst. But if thou lovest thy own soul, make a true representation of thy state to thy self. O what folly is it, for a man to lose his cause by concealing the badness of it!

Secondly, Labour to bring thy self under the sense of thy miserable condition as thou art: Hadst thou the Empire of the world, and all Nations creeping to thy foot, as once the beasts did to *Adam*, and

a lease as long as *Methuselah's* life twice told, to joy it in; without the interposition of one cloud the while, to darken the glory of this thy room, yet supposing thee to be one, to whom God is an enemy; I would choose to be the worm under the foot, the toad in the ditch, sooner than thy miserable self in thy palace. One thought of thy approaching death and eternal misery in store for thee, let out all the joy of thy present happiness. This makes the great ones of the world, indeed unreconciled sinners high and low, to go to graves, as *Bears* down a hill backwards; as they should but look forward whither they were going, their hearts would soon be at the door for want of this Breast-plate; a comfortable persuasion of their peace made with God. Go therefore (as a poor malefactor condemned to die) shut thy self up from all thy old flattering companions, that would still lullaby thy miserable self into a senseless security, (the cradle which the Devil rocks souls in to their utter destruction) let none of them come to thee; but send for those that dare be faithful to thee, and like *Samuel*, tell thee every word that God saith against thee, and conceal nothing; yea, read thy doom with thy own eyes in the Word, and take thy condemnation from Gods own mouth, and not mans: *There is no peace to the wicked, say my God*; muse on it, till it cleaves to thy soul, like a drawing plaister to a sore, and brings out the very core of thy pride and carnal confidence, which hardened thy heart from all sense of thy condition, by which time the anguish of thy own spirit (seeing the streights thou art brought into) will prompt thee to desire peace with God, and this is that which God waits for to hear drop from thee, as much as *Benhadad's* servants, did for a word from *Adad's* mouth.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, Look thou propoundest right ends in thy desire of reconciliation with God. Nothing more hateful to God or man than falsehood and treachery

treachery in treaties of peace; and yet some men can have words as smooth as butter in their mouths, and war is in their hearts at the same time, *Psal. 55. 21.* Take heed of any hollowness of heart in thy enquiry for peace; when found out (as it must needs be, except Gods eye fails him, which is impossible) it will exceedingly harden the heart of God against thee. God never repented of any he pardoned or took up into the chariot of peace with him; because he was never deceived by any; as men are, who often peace with those that prove at last false friends, and give them cause to wish they had never known them. *Joab* kill *Amasa*, but he took no heed to the sword in *Joabs* hand. God looks to the heart, and sees what is in its hand; be sure thou therefore stand clear in thy own thoughts, as to the peace thou aimest at. It is lawful for thee to look to thy own safety; God will give thee leave to look to thyself; this thou mayest, and yet not neglect him: there never was any peace true or sure, where only man made it; whether it be with God, or between man and man. Thou seest thou art undone, if thou despist thy old side, and therefore thou seek peace with God, as the Kings that served *Hadadadon*, when they saw he was smitten before *Israel*, they made peace with *Israel* themselves, *2 Sam. 10. 19.* Thou may be allowed thee to come over to God, but this is the surer side. Never any made peace with God, but this argument weighed much with him. If *Jacob* could have been safe at home, he had not gone to *Laban*; all are fired out of their holds, when they yield to God. But take heed this be not thy aimest at, or, the chief thou aimest at; this will do and hate God as much as ever; like the Philistines are said to yield feignedly to *Dauids* victory, because no help for it. A man taken in his own snare, may be forced under the penthouse of his own enemy for shelter, without any change of heart, or better thoughts of him, than before he was wont. Two things therefore thou must have in thy eye, above thy own self-preservation.

First, The honour of God. Hence oft the Saints prayers are prest with an argument from God, as well as themselves, and their own misery, *Psal. 79. 9.* O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy Names sake. Certainly, if God could not be more glorified in our peace and reconciliation, than in our wrath and damnation, it were a wicked thing to desire it. But God hath cleared this up to us, that he is so tender by acts of mercy. In this lies the greatest revenue of his Crown, or else he would not love mercy, rather than sacrifice; God is free to choose what suits his own heart best, and most conduceth to the exalting of his great Name; and he delights more in the mercy shewn to one, than in the blood of all the damned that are made a sacrifice to his justice. And indeed he had a higher end in their damnation, than their suffering; and that was the enhancing of the glory of his mercy in his saved ones. This is the beautiful piece God takes delight in, and the other but the shadow to it. Then thou art in a fit disposition to pray for peace, and mayest

go with encouragement, when thy heart is deeply affected with the honour that will accrue to God by it. It is an argument God will not deny. *Thou* (said *Abigail* to *David*) shall be no grief to thee, nor offence of heart unto my Lord, *1 Sam. 25.* He meant, he should never have cause to repent that he was kept from shedding blood. Thus mayest thou plead with God, and say, O Lord, when I shall with Saints and Angels, be praising thy pardoning grace in heaven, it will not grieve thee, that thy mercy kept thee from shedding my blood, damning my soul in hell. But now 'tis evident, that many who seem to seek peace, and pursue it too very strongly, yet do not take over-much care for Gods honour in the thing. Because they are earnest with God to pardon them in a way that were to him dishonourable; Pardoned they would be, though wholly ignorant of God and Christ: they would have God to be at peace with them, while they are enemies to him. Like a Thief at the bar, he would have the Judge spare his life right or wrong, legally or illegally, what cares he? doth this wretch consider the honour of the Judge? or that sinner, who so he be saved, cares not how unrighteous God is in the act of mercy? O deceive not your selves poor souls, God will not make war between his own attributes, to make peace with you.

Secondly, You must desire to be reconciled to God, that you may have fellowship with God. Certainly a soul sensible what the loss of communion with God is, counts it hath not all her errand done, when it hath asked peace given it; should God say, Soul I am friends with thee; I have ordered thou shalt never go to hell, here is a discharge under my hand, that thou shalt never be arrested for my debt more; but as for any fellowship with me, or fruition of me, thou canst expect none: I have done with thee, for ever being acquainted more with thee, certainly the soul would take little joy in her peace; were the fire out as to positive torments, yet a hell would be left in the dismal darkness, which the soul would sit under for want of Gods presence. *Abalom* knew no middle condition that could please him, betwixt seeing the King his Fathers face, and being killed, *2 Sam. 14. 32.* Let me see the Kings face, and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me. If I be not worthy to enjoy my fathers love and presence, neither do I desire to live; whereas a naughty heart seeks reconciliation without any longing after fellowship with God; like the Traytor, if the King will but pardon and save him from the gallows, he is ready to promise him, never to trouble him at Court; 'tis his own life, not the Kings favour he desires.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Throw down thy rebellious arms, and humbly submit to his mercy. God will not so much as treat with thee so long as thy sword is in thy hand; Come now, let us reason together saith the Lord, *Isa. 1. 18.* Mark when the parly begins; put away the evil of your doings, *vers. 16.* Now come and treat with God about a peace.

First, God is a great God, and it doth not become his

It is Sovereignty to treat his sorry creature on equal terms, as a King doth with his fellow Prince, who if he cannot have peace on his own terms, is able probably to revenge himself by force of arms: But as a mighty King with his rebel subject, whom he hath fast bound with chains in prison, and can at pleasure hang up for his treason. The great God will have thee know that. Let those capitulate, who can retire to their strength, and live without peace: But as for thee poor sinner, thou doest not, I hope, think thou art in a capacity to meet God in the field, or to thrive by this trade of war against God. No, thy only way is to conquer him upon thy knee, to lay thy neck at his foot, and say, Lord I put my life in thy hands, thy true prisoner I will be, choosing rather to die by the hand of thy justice, than to continue fighting against thy mercy. Now poor soul, thou art got into the right path that leads to peace. *Humble your selves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,* James 4. 10. that soul shall not long be out of his arms, that is prostrate at his foot; But though the high and lofty one can stoop to take up a penitent sinner into the arms of his pardoning mercy; yet he will not debase his Sovereignty to treat with a wretch that stands to his arms, and flouts it out with him. There is one red letter in Gods Name, *he will by no means clear the guilty,* Exod. 34.

Secondly, The holy nature of God requires this; sin is that which made the breach, and caused God to take arms against his creature; how canst thou rationally think to make thy peace with him, and keep this make-bate in thy bosom? God is willing to be reconciled with thee, but wilt thou have him be at peace with thy sin also? Is it not enough to be justified from thy sin, but wouldst thou have God betray his own honour, by justifying thee in thy sin? Did you ever hear a Prince give a Patent to another to cut his own throat? What security canst thou give to God of thy love to him, if thou wilt not renounce that, which is the only thing that seeks his life? *Pecatum est delictum.* As long as the traitor is in favour within, God will not raise his siege, or hear of peace without. They cannot reign together; choose which you will have of them; And be not so far deluded as to think, 'tis enough to fend thy lust out of the way for a while, as Princes use to do their favourites in a popular commotion to please the people, and then call for them home, when the hubub is over. No, God will not be thus dog'd and mock'd. See how the promise runs, and this he will stand to. *Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon.* See how cautious God is in the terms: no corner left for the least sin to skulk and save its life in, *He must forsake;* that implies,

First, A deliberate choice in the soul, he does it freely; some mens sins forsake them; *the unclean spirit goes out,* and is not driven out; occasions to sin cease, or bodily ability to execute the commands of sin is wanting; here is no forsaking sin in all this; but to break from it with a holy indignation and resolution when temptation is most busy, and

strength most active, now (as David said, when his enemies compell'd him as Bees) in the Name of the Lord to repell and resist them, this is to forsake. This is the *Encomium* of Moses, he forsook the Court when he was grown up; not for age as *Bazillai*, but when his blood was warm in his veins. A man doth not forsake his wife, when he is detained from her in prison, but when he puts her away, and gives her a bill of divorce.

Secondly, *To forsake sin,* is to leave it without any thought reserved of returning to it again. Every time a man takes a journey from home about business, we do not say he hath forsaken his home, because he meant when he went out to come to it again. No, but when we see a man leave his home, carry all his stuff away with him, lock up his door, and take up his abode in another, never to dwell there more; here's a man hath indeed forsaken his house. It were strange to find a drunkard so constant in the exercise of that sin, but sometime he may find him sober; and yet a drunkard he is, as well as if he were then drunk. Every one hath forsaken his trade, that we see now and then in the holy-day suit; then the man forsakes his sin, when he throws it from him, and bolts the door upon it with a purpose never to open more to it, *14. 8. Ephraim shall say, what have I to do more with Idols?*

Again, Observe, before pardon can be secured, he must forsake not this sin, or that, but the whole law of sin. *Let the wicked forsake his way.* A traveller may step from one path to another, and go on the same way, leave a dirty, deep, rugged path, for one more smooth and even; so men finding some gross sins uneasy, and too toilsome to their awakened consciences, step into a more clean path of civility; but alas poor creatures, all they do is to go a little more easily and cleanly to hell, to their beastly neighbours; but he forsakes the way of sin, that turns out of the whole road; in a word, he must forsake the blindest path of all in sins way, that which lies behind the hedge, as I may so say, in the thoughts of the heart, *and the unrighteous in his thoughts;* or else thou knock'st in vain at Gods door for pardoning mercy, and therefore poor soul, forsake all or none: Save one lust, and you lose all soul; if men mean to go to hell, why are they so miserly? this halving with sin is ridiculous: Art thou afraid of this sin, and not of a less, which hinder thy peace, and procures thy damnation as fast, only not with so much distraction to thy drooping conscience at present? This is as ridiculous, as it was with him, who being to be hanged, desired that he might by no means go through such a street to the gallows, for fear of the plague that was there. What wilt thou get poor sinner, if thou goest to hell, though thou goest thither by thy ignorance, unbelief, spiritual pride, &c. yet led about so, as to escape the plague of open profaneness? O sirs, consider but the equity, the honourableness of the terms that God offers peace upon; what lust is so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for? *Derisus,* when he fled before *Alexander,* that he might run the faster out of danger, *threw away his mass*

Crown from his head which bindeth him; and is any lust so precious in thy eye, that thou canst not leave it behind thee, rather than fall into the hands of Gods justice? But so sottish is foolish man, that a wise Heathen could take notice of it; *Ea sola emi putamus, pro quibus pecuniam solvimus; ea gratuita volumus, pro quibus nos ipsos impendimus, &c. Sen. Epist. 42.* We think we only buy what we part with money for; and as for those things we pay our selves, our souls for, these we think we have for nothing; as if the man were not more worth than his money.

SECT. VI.

Fourthly, Having been faithful to follow the preceding directions, thou now art in a fair way to effect thy much desired enterprize; hie thee therefore as soon as may be to the throne of grace, and humbly present thy request to God, that he would be at peace with thee; yea, carry with thee a faith that thou shalt find him more ready to embrace the motion, than thou to make it; only take heed, what thou present thy plea to move God, and where thou present thy confidence; not in thy repentance or reformation; this were to play the Merchant with God; now he expects not a chapman to truck with him, but an humble supplicant to be suitor to him. Nor his absolute mercy (as ignorant souls do) this is to take hold of the Sword by the blade, and not by the hilt; such will find their death and damnation from his mercy, which they might be saved by, if they did take hold of it as God offers it them, and that is, through Christ, *Mat. 27. 5.* Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. And where lies Gods saving strength, but in Christ? he hath laid strength upon his mighty one, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God. It is not Gods absolute power or mercy, which help thee, but his Covenant, strength and mercy, as this is in Christ. Take hold of Christ, and thou shalt hold of Gods arm, he cannot strike the soul that trusts thereby. Indeed, Gods essential goodness is a powerful argument to persuade the poor soul to rely upon the promise in Christ for pardon, when he considers that God who promises peace to the believer, is a God whose very nature is forgiving, and mercy it self; but had there been no promise to engage this mercy to poor sinners through Christ, this would have been but cold comfort, to have believed God was good. He could have damned the whole stock of Adam, and not called his essential goodness the least in question. It is no blot to the almightiness of his power, that he doth not all he can. He could make more worlds (if he were so pleas'd) than he hath done; but we have no ground to believe he will, neither is he the less Almighty, because he does not; so he could have saved the fallen Angels with the sons of lost man: He is not scantied in mercy for such a design, if he had thought it fit; but having pass'd no promise for such a thing, the essential goodness of God affords the devils but little relief, or hope that he will do it; and yet God continues good. And for ought I can find out of

the Word, they among the sons of men, who (either through simple ignorance of the Gospel, or prejudice, which their proud reason hath taken up against the way it chalks out for making our peace with God, through Christs satisfaction for us) do neglect Christ, or scornfully reject this his satisfaction, and betake themselves to the absolute goodness and mercy of God, as the plea which they will make at Christs bar for their pardon and salvation, shall find as little benefit from it, as the devils themselves; suppose (friends) a Prince should freely make a Law, by which he will govern his people, and takes a solemn oath to keep close to it; could a malefactor that is condemned by this Law to die, expect any relief by appealing from the Law to the mercy and goodness of the Princes nature? I confess some have sped and saved their lives by taking this course: But it hath been because either the Prince was imprudent in making the Law, or unfaithful in keeping his oath: Neither of which can without blasphemy be imputed to God infinitely wise and holy. He hath enacted a Law, called the Law of Faith, for the saving poor sinners through Christ, and is under an oath to make it good both in the salvation of every one that believes on Christ, and damnation on every one that doth not believe, and to make all sure, hath given Christ an oath to be faithful in his office, who was trusted as Priest to procure redemption, and shall sit Judge to pronounce the sentence (at the great day) of absolution or condemnation. Take heed therefore poor sinner, that thou beest not drawn from placing thy entire confidence on Christ the Son of God, both God and man in one person, who laid down his life upon agreement with his Father, to make an atonement for the sin of the world; and now offers thee that blood (which then he shed) as a price to carry in the hand of thy faith to the Father for pardon and peace. No, though they should come and call thee from Christ to Christ, from a Christ without thee, to a Christ within thee: As the Jesuit doth in the Quaker, into whom he is now got: As the Friars of old were wont into their hollow images, that they might deliver their lying doctrines out of the mouths of their reputed Saints, and thereby cozen the multitude without any suspicion of their knavery. Just so do the Jesuits now-a-days deliver their Popish stuff out of the mouths of the Quakers. A design so much more dangerous, as 'tis more cunning than the other; There is too much light shed abroad, for that old puppet-play to take; but though men are too wise to lend an ear to a block or a stone; yet holiness in a living Saint commands such reverence, that the devil hath ever found, and will to the end of the world, that he may pass least suspected under this cloak. Well, when he comes to call thee from a Christ without thee, to a Christ within thee, strip the doctrine out of its pleasing phrase; and in plain English, he calls thee from trusting in the righteousness of Christ wrought by him for thee, and by faith to be made thine for thy justification before God, to an inherent work of grace or righteousness wrought by the Spirit of God in thee for thy sanctification and renovation, called sometimes the new creature, and Christ within us, Now,

Now, hadst thou not made a goodly change, if thou hadst let go thy hold on Christ, who is thy righteousness, to rely on a creature, and that a weak one too, God knows, full of so many imperfections, that thy conscience (except injudicious, and given over to believe a lie) can tell, that 'tis but as a vein of gold imbedded with much more earth and dross, which shall never be quite purged till thou beest put into the refining-pot of the grave: look to thy self Christian, here 'tis matter of life and death; prize Christ's grace within thee thou must; yea, thou hast none in thee, if thou dost not value it above all the mountains of gold the world hath; But trust not to this Christ, or grace of Christ within thee for life and salvation; for now thou prizest the creature above God, and seizest Christ within thee to fight with Christ within thee. The Bride doth well highly to esteem her husband's picture, which he hath given

her, especially if very like him, and most of all if drawn by his own hand: But it were very ridiculous, if she should doat on that so far as to leave her husband, and when she wants money, clothes, or the like, to go not to her husband, but to the picture he gave her for all. The Saints grace is called, Christ within him, because it is his picture, and makes the Saint so like Christ: This for the resemblance it bears to the holiness of Christ himself her husband, who with the finger of his own Spirit drew it on thy soul, deserves highly to be valued. But what a dotage were it for thee to turn thy back on the Lord Jesus Christ himself, to whom by faith thou art married; and when thou wanted pardon and comfort, wouldst have heaven and happiness, to expect these, not from Christ, but thy grace? O will Christ thank thee for honouring his creature to the dishonour of his person?

CHAP. VII.

*Who are at peace
with God—*

An Exhortation to such as are at peace with God, in six particulars.

Use 2. Secondly, A few words by way of improvement, to you whose peace is concluded with Christ.

First, Hast thou peace with God? look thou *makest no peace with sin.* This broke thy peace with God; now let thy peace with God begin a war with that, never to have end. Thou canst not sure forget the inestimable wrong and damage thou hast suffered by it; every moments sweet enjoyment of God (whose bosome-love thou hast now happily recovered) will help to keep the fire of wrath and revenge burning in thy heart against that cursed enemy, that both threw and kept thee so long thence. God hath now won thy heart (I hope) by his pardoning mercy, dearly to love him for his love to thee. How then canst thou with patience see any lust come braving forth from its trench (thy heart I mean) defying thy God and his grace in thee? Paul's spirit was stirred in him at Athens, to see God dishonoured by the superstition of others; and is not thine, to see him reproach'd by the pride, unbelief, and other sins that do it from under thy own souls roof? Oh Christian, meditate some noble exploit against it; now the more to steel thy heart, and harden it against all relenting towards it; carry the blood and wounds of thy Saviour into the field with thee, in the hand of thy Faith; The sight of these will certainly enrage thy heart against thy lusts, that stab'd and killed him; more than the bloody garments of Caesar (held up by Anthony) did the Roman Citizens against his murderers. Oh see how cruelly they used the Lord of glory, and where they laid him in an ignominious grave, and that fastened with a seal, stronger than that which man set to it (the curse due to us sinners) never possible to have been broke up by any less than his own Almighty arm. And now Christian, shall these murderers, not of man, but of God (for it was the blood of God

that was shed) escape that vengeance, which God would have done with thy hand upon them? wherefore else doth he leave them any life in thy soul, but that thou shouldst have the opportunity of shewing thy love to Christ, by running thy dagger of mortification into their heart? Alexander got not more honour by his great victories in the field, than by his piety to his dead father Philip: whose bloody death he avenged; as soon as he came into the Throne, slaying the murderers upon his fathers Tomb. O shew thou (Christian) thy piety to thy dear Saviour, by falling upon thy cursed lusts, and that speedily; never rest till thou hast had his blood, that shed his; till thou doest this, thou art consenting to all the cruelty that was executed in him; This, this is the honour which all the Saints shall have, and therefore the two-edged Sword of the Spirit is put into their hands, that they may execute the vengeance written.

Secondly, Is God reconciled to thee? Be thou willing to be reconciled to any that have wronged thee. Thy God expects it at thy hands. Thou hast reason to pardon thy brother for Gods sake, who pardoned thee for his pure mercies sake. Thou in pardoning doest no more than thou owest thy brother; but God pardoned thee when he did owe thee nothing but wrath. Thou needst not (I hope) think that thou dishonourest thy self in the act, though it be to the veriest beggar in the town, when thou doest it after thy betters. Thy God stooped lower when he reconciled himself to thee, yet sought it at thy hands, and no dishonour neither to the high and lofty One. Nay, by implacable and revenge thou debasest thy self the most thou canst likely do; for by these thou stoopest not only beneath thy heaven-born nature, but humane; to the Devil, and none but such as bear his image that are implacable enemies; Hell-fire it is that is unquenchable,

quenchable. *The wisdom from above is easily to be unlearned.* Thou a Christian, and carry hell-fire about thee? how can it be? when we see a child furious and revengeful, that comes of merciful parents; we use to say, we wonder of whom he got his curriish, churlish disposition, *his father and mother were not so*; who learns thee, O Christian, to be so revengeful and unmerciful? thou hast it not of thy heavenly Father I am sure.

Thirdly, Is God at peace with thee? hath he pardoned thy sins? never then distrust his providence for any thing thou wantest, as to this life; two things well weighed, would help thy faith in this particular. First, when he pardoned thy sins, he did more for thee than this comes to, and did he give the greater, and will he grutch thee the less? Thou hast Christ in thy pardon bestowed on thee; *How shall he not with him also freely give thee all things?* Rom. 8. 32. When the father gives his child the whole orchard, it were folly to question, whether he gives him this apple or that in it. *All things are yours, and you are Christs,* 1 Cor. 3. 22. The reconciled soul hath a right to all. The whole world is his; but as a father, though he settles a fair estate on his child, yet lets him hold no more in his own hand, than he can well manage; so God gives believers a right to all the comforts of this life, but proportions so much out to them for their actual use, as his infinite wisdom sees meet; so that he that hath less than another in his present possession, ought to impute it not to any want of love or care in God, but to the wisdom both of his love and care, that gives stock as we have grace to work it out; we pour the wine according as the cup is; that which but fills one would half be lost, if poured into a less. Secondly, Consider how God gives these temporals to those that he denies peace and pardon to. Though within a while they are to be tumbled into hell, yet while on earth his providence reacheth unto them; and doth God feed these Ravens, unclean birds? doth he cause his rain to drop fatness on their fields, and will he neglect thee thinkest thou, that art a believer? If the Prince feeds the traitor in prison, surely the child in his house shall not starve. In a word (to allude to that, *Luke 12. 28.*) if God in his providence so abounds to the ungodly (as we see he doth) if he cloaths this grass (for to this the wicked may well be compared) which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into hells burning oven, *how much more will he cloath you, O ye of little faith?*

Fourthly, Art thou at peace with God? O then shew no discontent at any cross or affliction that God visiteth thee withal. If he hath visited thee first with his mercy, thou hast reason to bid him kindly welcome, when he comes to visit thee with his rod. Thou hast sugar by thee now to sweeten thy bitter cup; when the Prophet Samuel came to Bethlehem, it is said, *The Elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? and he said Peaceably,* 1 Sam. 16. 4. Thus when God comes with some heavy affliction to us, it may make us tremble till we know what it comes for, whether peaceably or no. Now, if thou beest at peace with

God, the fear is over; it cannot but come peaceably: Thou mayest conclude it comes on mercies errand; what condition canst thou (O pardoned soul) be in; that should part thee and the joy of thy peace with God? Is it the wrath of man thou fearest? possibly thou hast many enemies, and those great ones, and their wrath as great as such can express. Let it be so; is God among them or no? Doth God let out their wrath in his wrath against thee? if not, thou exceedingly wrongest God, if over-much troubled, and thy self also. Thou wrongest God by not sanctifying his name in thy heart, whose mercy (I hope) is able to secure thee from their wrath. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8. 31. Thou need'st not fear them, though an army of them about thee, no more than if they were so many wisps of straw. And thou wrongest thy self also; how indeed can we wrong God and not our selves? so long as thou art under the power of such a fear from mans wrath, thou canst never have the taste of Gods love in its true sweetness.

Again, Art thou sick, poor, and what not beside? may not God reasonably expect, that reconciling mercy should stop thy mouth from whispering any word of discontent against him, and prevent all envious glances of thy eye at the prosperity of the wicked? Remember man, that thou canst say one great word, which they cannot, in the midst of all their pomp and worldly glory, *Though I lie here poor and sick, yet I am through mercy, at peace with God.* This well thought on, would soon change both your notes: The joy of the prosperous sinner into bitter mourning, and thy sorrow (Christian) into joy. The Lady Elizabeth (afterwards England's gracious Queen) hearing a simple Milk-maid sing merrily in the field, when she poor Princess (being then a sorrowful prisoner) had more mind to sigh than sing (though served at the same time in state as a Princess) said, *that poor maid was happier than her self.* And so would the sinner (how great and high soever in the world) think the poorest Christian with his rags and penury, a better man, and happier in his liberty, and peace with God, than himself, in all his grandeur and worldly gayeties, did he but consider that in the midst of all these he is a prisoner, not to man, but God, out of whose hands there is no escaping.

Fifthly, Comfort thy self with this; that thou who art at peace with God now on earth, shalt feast with God ere long in heaven, Rom. 8. 30. *And whom he justified, them also he glorified.* And do not think this news too good or great to be true. Here is a word for it you see. Heavens number of glorified Saints, is made up of justified sinners. Neither more nor less of the one, than of the other. Art thou justified by faith, by which thou hast peace with God? then lose not thy privilege, but rejoyce with thy fellow-Saints, *in the hope of the glory of God.* It is before thee; every day brings thee nearer to it, and nothing can hinder thee of it at last; *not thy sins themselves, and I know thou fearest them most.* He that paid thy great score at thy conversion, will find mercy enough in his heart surely, to pass by thy dribbling debts, which thy own infirmity and

Satans subtilty have run thee into. Thou wert an enemy, when God thought of doing the first; but now thou art a friend, and this will oblige him to do the second, that he may not lose his disbursement in the first: yea provision is made by God in his method of our salvation for the one, as strongly as for the other. Christ died to make us of enemies to God, friends with him: and he lives now to bring God and us (being thus made friends) to meet in one heaven together. Yea, the Apostle gives the advantage to this of the two for our faith to triumph in. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* Rom. 5. 10. As if the Apostle had said, Can you believe, that God hath taken you that were bloody enemies into a state of peace and favour with himself? surely, then you must needs find it easier for your faith to argue from reconciliation to salvation, than from hostility and enmity, to pardon and peace; could Christ procure the one by his death, when he was weakest (as I may so say) and at the lowest descent of his humiliation? How much more shall he in the height of his Court-favour in heaven (where he hath all power given him, and in particular the keys of hell and death to open and shut as he pleaseth) be able to save those whom he hath reconciled?

Sixthly, Art thou at peace with God? knowing the goodness of God to thy self, do thou wooe in some others to embrace the same mercy. The house is not so full, but yet *there is room*, Luke 14. 22. Hast thou none thou lovest so well, as to wish them thy happiness? haply thou hast a carnal husband lying by thy side, children of thy womb or loyns, neighbours in whose company thou art every day almost, and all these in an unreconciled state; who, should they dye as now they live, their precious souls are lost for ever, and yet themselves think no more of this misery coming on them, than the silly sheep doth what the Butcher is doing, when he is whetting his knife to cut her throat. Well, the less merciful they are to their own souls, the more need there is thou should'st shew thy compassion towards them. We take most care of those that are

least capable of taking care for themselves. If thou hadst a friend sick in thy house, and of such a disease that he could not help himself, should he dye rather than thou would'st look after him? If a child condemned to dye, though he did himself not mind the getting of a pardon, yet surely thou would'st run and ride to obtain it, rather than see him end his days so shamefully. In a word, did'st thou but know that thy next neighbour had an intention to foredo himself, and for that end had lock'd himself up in a room; wouldst thou not bestir thee to break up the door, rather than the man should thus miscarry? But alas, where is the holy violence that is used to save poor souls? Parents, husbands, neighbours, they can see their relations going to hell before their eyes; and who saith to them, why do you so? O for the Lords sake be more merciful to the souls of others. Thou hast found a feast, let not any that are near thee starve for want of knowledge, where it is to be had; go and invite all thou canst see, to Gods house: so did David, Psal. 34. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* Thou need'st not fear a chiding from God, for sending him more guests. He complains he hath no more; *Te will not come unto me that ye may have life*, Joh. 5. 40. He threatens those that keep sinners off from making their peace with him, by flattering them with a false one, called a *strengthening of the hands of the wicked*, that he should not return from his wicked way, by *promising him life*, Ezek. 13. 22. O how acceptable a work then must it needs be to wooe souls to Christ! The Merchant is not angry for sending a customer into his Ware-house, that will buy what he hath taken so much cost and travel to get that he may sell; Nor will the Physician blame any for bringing a Patient to him, by whose cure he may let the world know his skill and art. And this is the great design Christ hath long had, and in particular pray'd for, Joh. 17. 21. *That the world might believe that he was sent of God*; what aims he at in the gathering in of souls by the grace of the Gospel, but to *take out a people (from the heap of sinners) for his name*? Act. 15. 14 that is, cull out a number, in shewing mercy to whom he might exalt his own name gloriously.

CHAP. VIII.

That Peace of Conscience is a blessing to be obtain'd from the Gospel, and only the Gospel, with a double demonstration thereof.

Peace of conscience
see 141-142-143-144-

WE come now to the second kind of peace, and that is peace of consolation, or peace of conscience; by the former the poor sinner is reconciled to God; by this, he becomes *anima pacata sibi*, a soul reconciled to it self; since man fell out with God, he could never be truly friends with his own conscience. This second peace is so necessary, that he cannot taste the sweetness of the first, nor indeed of any other mercy without it. This is to the soul what health is to the body; it sugars and sweetens all enjoyments. A suit (though of cloth of

gold) fits not easie on a sick mans back: Nothing joyous to a distressed conscience. Moses brought good news to the distressed Israelites in Egypt, but it is said, *They hearkened not to him for anguish of spirit*, Exod. 6. 9. Hannah, she went up to the festival at Jerusalem with her husband, but 'tis said, *she wept and did not eat*, 1 Sam. 1. 7. Truly thus the wounded soul goes to the Sermon, but doth not eat of the feast before it, hears many precious promises, but her ear is shut up from receiving the good news they bring. Tell one in trouble of conscience, here's your

your dear husband, sweet children, will you not rejoice with them? alas, the throes such a one feels, are so amazing, that he regards these things no more than *Phineas's wife in her sore travail*, did the women that joy'd her with the birth of a son. Set the Royallest feast before such a soul, that ever was on Princes table, and (poor heart!) it had rather go into a corner and weep, than sit and eat of those delicacies. *A wounded spirit who can bear?* yea who can cure? some diseases are for their incurableness, called *ludibrium medicorum*, *The Physicians shame* and reproach. To be sure this spiritual trouble of an accusing conscience puts all the world to shame for their vain attempts. Many have attempted to conjure this evil spirit out of their own bosoms and others; but have found it at last to leap upon them, and prevail against them, as the *evil spirit*, Acts 19. 14. did by the *Sons of Sceva*.

Now, peace of conscience (I am now to shew) is the blessing of the Gospel, and only of the Gospel: Conscience knows Jesus, and the Gospel of Jesus; these and none else it will obey. Two particulars consider'd will demonstrate the truth of the point. First, if we consider what is the argument that pacifies and satisfies conscience. Secondly, what the power and strength that is required to apply this argument so close and home to the conscience as to quiet and fully satisfy it, both these will be found in the Gospel, and only in the Gospel.

S E C T. I.

First, Let us enquire what is the argument that is able to pacify conscience, when thoroughly awakened. Now to know this, we must enquire, what is the cause of all those convulsions of horror and terror with which the consciences of men are at any time so sadly rent and distorted. Now this is sin; could this little word (but great plague) be quite blotted out of mens minds and hearts, the storm would be soon hush'd, and the soul become a pacifique sea, quiet and smooth, without the least wave of fear to wrinkle the face thereof. This is the *Jonas* which raiseth the storm; The *Achan*, that troubles the soul. Where-ever this comes (as was observed of a great Queen in France) a war is sure to follow; when *Adam* sinned, he dissolved another manner of jewel than *Cleopatra* did; he drank away this sweet peace of conscience in one unhappy draught, which was worth more to him than the world he lived in. No wonder that it rose in his conscience as soon as it was down his throat: *They saw that they were naked*, Heb. 10. 2. Their consciences reproach'd them for cursed Apostates. That therefore which brings peace to conscience, must prostrate this *Goliath*, throw this troubler over-board, pluck this arrow out of the soul; or else the war will not end, the storm will not down, the wound will not close and heal, which conscience labours under. Now the envenomed head of sin's arrow, that lies burning in conscience, and by its continual boking and throbbing there, keeps the poor sinner out of quiet, yea, sometime in insupportable torment and horror, is guilt, whereby the creature is alarm'd up

to judgment, and bound over to the punishment due to his sin; which being no less than the infinite wrath of the eternal living God, must needs lay the poor creature into a dismal agony, from the fearful expectation thereof in his accusing conscience: He therefore that would use an argument to pacify and comfort a distressed conscience, that lies roasting upon these burning coals of Gods wrath, kindled by his guilt, must quench these coals, and bring him the certain news of this joyful message, that his sins are all pardoned, and God (whose wrath doth so affright him) is undoubtedly, yea, everlastingly reconciled to him. This, and no other argument will stop the mouth of conscience, and bring the creature to true peace with his own thoughts; *See of good cheer* (said Christ to the *Palsie-man*) *thy sins be forgiven thee*, Matth. 9. 2. Not be of good cheer, thy health is given thee, (though that he had also) but thy sins are forgiven thee. If a friend should come to a malefactor on his way to the gallows, put a sweet posie into his hands, and bid him be of good cheer, smell on that; alas, this would bring little joy with it to the poor mans heart, who sees the place of execution before him. But if one comes from the Prince with a pardon, which he puts into his hand, and bids him be of good cheer: this, and this only will reach the poor mans heart, and over-run it with a sudden ravishment of joy. Truly any thing short of pardoning mercy, is as inconsiderable to a troubled conscience, (towards any relieving or pacifying it) as that posie in a dying prisoners hand would be. Conscience demands as much to satisfy it, as God himself doth to satisfy him for the wrong the creature hath done him. Nothing can take off conscience from accusing, but that which takes off God from threatening. Conscience is Gods Serjeant he employs to arrest the sinner. Now the Serjeant hath no power to release his prisoner upon any private composition between him and the prisoner; but listens, whether the debt be fully paid, or the creditor fully satisfied: Then, and not till then, he is discharg'd of his prisoner. Well, we have now only one step to go further, and we shall bring this demonstration to a head; from what quarter comes this good news, that God is reconciled to a poor soul, and that his sins are pardoned? surely from the Gospel of Christ, and no other way besides. Here alone is the Covenant of peace to be read betwixt God and sinners; here the sacrifice by which this pardon is purchased; here the means discovered by which poor sinners may have benefit of this purchase; and therefore here alone can the accusing conscience find peace. Had the stung *Israelites* lookt on any other object, besides the *brazen Serpent*, they had never been healed. Neither will the stung conscience find ease with looking upon any, besides Christ in the Gospel-promise. The *Levites* and the *Priests*, lookt on the wounded man, but would not come near him; there he might have lain and perished in his blood for all them. It was the good *Samaritan* that poured oyl into his wounds. Not the Law, but Christ by his blood, bathes and supples, closeth and cureth the wounded conscience. Not a drop of oyl in all the world to be got, that is worth any thing

for this purpose, besides what is provided and laid up in this Gospel vial. There was abundance of sacrifices offered up in the Jewish Church; yet put all the blood of those beasts together, which was poured out from first to last in that dispensation, and they were not able to quiet one conscience, or purge away one sin. *The conscience of sin*, as the Apostle phraseth it, *Heb. 10. 2.* that is, guilt in their conscience would still have remained unblotted, notwithstanding all these (if sever'd from what was spiritually signified by them.) And the reason is given, *verf. 4.* *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.* There is no proportion betwixt the blood of beasts though it could swell into a river, a sea, and the demerit of the least sin. Mans sin deserves mans death, and that eternal both of soul and body in hell. This is the price God hath set upon the head of every sin. Now the death of beasts being so far beneath this price, which divine justice demands as satisfaction for the wrong sin doth him; it must needs be as far beneath pacifying the sinners conscience; which requires as much to satisfie it, yea the very same, as it doth to satisfie the justice of God himself. But in the Gospel, behold joyful news is brought to the sinners ears of a fountain of blood there opened, which for its preciousness is as far above the price that divine justice demands for mans sin, as the blood of bulls and beasts was beneath it; and that is, the blood of Jesus Christ, who freely poured it out upon the Cross, and by it obtained eternal redemption for us, *Heb. 9.* This is the door that all true peace and joy comes in to the conscience by; Hence we are directed to bottom our confidence, and draw out comfort here, and no where else, *Heb. 10. 22.* *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; Mark that, sprinkled from an evil conscience:* Conscience by office is appointed, to judge of a mans actions and state; whether good or bad, pardoned or unpardoned: If the state be good, then it is to acquit and comfort; if evil, then to accuse and condemn him; therefore the evil conscience here, is the *accusing conscience*: From this evil conscience we are said to be sprinkled, that is, freed by the blood of Christ sprinkled on us; 'tis in the evil conscience accuseth of, and wrath (the due punishment for that) it condemns the poor creature unto; and to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ is to have the blood of Christ applied to the heart by the Spirit for pardon and reconciliation with God. *Sprinkling in the Law* did denote the cleansing of the person so sprinkled, from all legal impurities, *Levit. 14. 6.* yea, the believing soul from all sinful uncleanness by the blood of Christ, which was signified by the blood of those sacrifices. Therefore David prays, *Psal. 51. 7.* *Purge me with hyssop, then shall I be clean, that is, apply the blood of Christ to my troubled conscience (as they with a bunch of hyssop did the blood of the beast into which it was dipp'd, upon the Laver, to cleanse him.) Then (saith he) I shall be clean; this sin, which now doth affright my conscience, shall be wash'd off, and I at peace, as if I had never sinn'd.* To this sprinkling of blood the

Holy Ghost alludes, *Heb. 12. 24.* where we are said in the Gospel-administration, *To be come to Jesus the Mediatour of a better Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel;* that is, better things in the conscience. *Abel's blood* sprinkled in the guilt of it upon Cain's conscience, spake swords and daggers, hell and damnation; but the blood of Christ sprinkled in the conscience of a poor trembling sinner, speaks pardon and peace. Hence it is called *the answer of a good conscience toward God*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 3. 21.* An answer supposeth a question; an answer toward God, supposeth a question from God to the creature. Now the question God here is supposed to propound to the poor creature, may be conceiv'd to be this; What caus't thou say (who art a sinner, and standst by the curse of my righteous Law doom'd to death and damnation) why thou shouldst not dye the death pronounced against every sinner?

Now the soul that hath heard of Christ, and hearing of him, hath received him by faith into his heart, is the person, and the only person, that can answer this question, so as to satisfie God or himself. Take the answer, as it is formed and fitted for, yea, put into the mouth of every believer, by the Apostle Paul, *Rom. 8. 34.* *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dyed, yea, rather than be risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;* such an answer that is, that God himself cannot object against it; and therefore St. Paul (representing all believers) triumphs in the invincible strength thereof against all the enemies of our salvation; *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* *verf. 35.* and proceed to challenge in death and Devils, with all their attendants, to come and do their worst against believers, who have got this breast-work about them, and at last he displays his victorious colours, and goes out of the field with this holy confidence, that none (be they what they will) shall ever be able to hurt them, *verf. 38, 39.* *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;* in him he lodgeth his colours, and layes up all his confidence. But I am afraid I have been too long; if I can be said to be too long on this subject, the richest vein in the whole myne of Gospel-treasure.

SECT. II.

The second demonstration is taken from the strength and power required to press this argument home to the conscience, so as to satisfie it, and make it acquiesce therein; Conscience is a lock that goes hard; though the key fit it (I mean the argument used to comfort it be suitable and strong) yet if this Key be in a weak hand, that cannot turn it in this lock (as it is when ever a meer creature holds it) conscience will not open; its doubts and fears will not be resolv'd. No, this must be the work of the Spirit, or else it will never be done. Conscience is Gods officer; and though the debt be paid in heaven,

heaven, yet it will not let the soul go free, till a warrant comes from thence to authorize it. And who can bring this but the Spirit of God? so that, as 'tis not in all their power that are about the poor prisoner to comfort him, till news come from Court, what the Prince means to do with him; so here in this case. *When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who can behold him?* Job 34. 29. Now two things I shall do for the bringing this demonstration to a head. First, Shew that the Gospel only presents the Spirit of God to us under the notion of a Comforter. Secondly, The admirable fitness and sufficiency of the holy Spirit to pacify and comfort a guilty troubled conscience: the first will evince, that peace of conscience is no where else to be found but from the Gospel; the second will shew, that it is there abundantly to be found.

First, 'Tis the Gospel alone that presents the Spirit of God as a Comforter to poor sinners. Indeed the comforting office of the Spirit is founded on the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. When Christ had shed his blood, and in it laid down upon the nail, the full price of a sinners peace with God; then at his return to heaven he prays his Father to send the Comforter: Neither could Christ desire this request of his Father, nor his Father grant it to him, but upon the account of this his death, which secures the justice of God from receiving any damage by the comfort which the Spirit carries into the believing sinners bottom. Christ tells his Disciples thus much, John 16. 7. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you*; pray mark, the Spirit as a Comforter, stays till Christ goes to heaven to send him down; and no room for Christ there, till the work was done he came about; and what was that, but by his bloody death to purchase peace with God for poor believing sinners? and now let him come when he will, the Spirit is ready to be sent as a Comforter, as soon as he appears in the heavens with his blood as an Intercessor. But whence then had the Old Testament-Saints all their peace and comfort, who liv'd before Christ return'd to heaven; yea, before he took his first journey, from heaven I mean to earth? I answer, upon the same account they had their comfort, that they had their pardon. They were pardoned through the blood of Christ, who was virtually a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and they were comforted by the Spirit of Christ, whose comforting office bears the same date with Christs Mediators office. As all their pardons were issued out upon the credit of Christ, who stood engaged in the fulness of time to lay down his life; so all the comforts which the Spirit of Christ issued out into their consciences, was upon the same credit of Christ, who should, as in the fulness of time dye on earth for sinners, so appear also in the heavens, (by virtue of the satisfaction that his death should make) there to intercede with the father for a Comforter. Thus you see the first thing. The Spirit as a Comforter hath his office from the Gospel-Covenant, and could never have spoke word of comfort, but upon this Gospel account. Hence it is, when the Father sends him

as a Comforter, he sends him in Christs Name, who hath made up the breach betwixt him and sinners; John 14. 26. that is, for his sake, and at his entreaty; yea, when the spirit doth comfort, what is it he saith? the joyful news he brings, is Gospel-intelligence, John 16. 13, 14. *He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, he shall speak*; the meaning is, when he comes to teach, he shall not bring new light, different from what shines in the Gospel, but what truth Christ preach't in the Gospel, that he shall teach when he comforts; the ingredients which his soul-reviving cordials shall be made of, are, what grow in the Gospel-garden, as ver. 14. *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it to you*; that is, my death, my merit, my resurrection, my ascension and intercession, my promises purchased and sealed with my blood; these he shall take and make report of them to you, for your eternal joy and comfort; so that, if it had not been for these, the Spirit who is Christs messenger, would have wanted an errand of this comfortable nature to have brought unto poor sinners: yea, instead of a Comforter, he would have been an accuser and a tormentor; he that now bears witness with our spirits for our reconciliation, adoption and salvation, would have joyn'd in a sad testimony with our guilty consciences against us, for our damnation and destruction.

Secondly, I am to shew the admirable fitness of the Spirit for this comforting office, which the Gospel reveals him to have, for the pacifying and satisfying the consciences of poor disconsolate sinners; You have heard the Gospel affords an argument sufficient to satisfy the most troubled conscience in the world, to wit, the full satisfaction which Christ by his precious blood hath made to God for sinners. But if poor man had been left to improve this as well as he could for his comfort, he might have lay'n long enough roaring in the horror of his scorched conscience without ease, for want of one to drop this cooling healing balm into it. But as both the wisdom and love of God appear'd in providing an able Saviour to purchase eternal redemption for us; so also a meet Comforter, as able to apply this purchased redemption to us; his Consolations are called *strong Consolations*. Christ shew'd his strength, when he unhing'd the gates of the grave, and made his way out of that dark prison by his glorious resurrection: by this, he was declared to be the Son of God with power, as the Apostle hath it, Rom. 1. 4. And truly it requires no lesse power to break open the dungeon, wherein the guilty conscience lies shut up, as one free among the dead in his own despairing thoughts; for if you observe it well, the same stone and seal are upon the sinners conscience to keep him down from a resurrection to comfort, as was on Christs grave, to keep him down from a resurrection to life. What was the heaviest stone, the strongest seal upon dead Jesus to keep him from rising? not the stone man rolled upon him; not the seal the Jews thought to fasten the grave with; but the curse of the Law for sin, which Divine justice rolled upon him; this prest the heaviest upon Christ without all compare; the Angel himself that roll'd away the stone

stone, could not have removed the curse; now look upon the distressed consciences grave, where its own guilt hath laid it, what is that? no other, than the lowest hell in its fears and present dismal apprehensions, I am damned, I am for ever an undone creature, is the language such a one rings continually in his own ears, but enquire what is it that keeps him down in this grave; what hinders, but the poor wretch may be help'd out of this pit of horror, and receive some comfort? alas, he will tell you that it is but in vain to comfort him, this ointment is all wasted to no purpose, which you pour upon his head. No, he is an undone sinner; the curse of God sticks like a dagger in his heart, the wrath of God lies like a mountain of lead on his conscience; except you can put your hand into his bosom, and pluck out the one, or by main force roll off the other, 'tis impossible, that he should be raised to any peace or comfort in his miserable conscience; you see it is the same grave-stone on both. But for thy eternal comfort know (poor heart) that art thus fast laid under the sense of the curse due to thy sins: as the weight is the same, that keeps thee from comfort, which lay on Christ to keep him from life, so the same power and strength is sent to raise thee to comfort, that enabled Christ to rise to life. That Spirit, who kept the Lord Jesus from seeing corruption in the grave, that restrained death, when it had Christ in its very mouth, so as it could no more feed on him, than the Whale could digest *Jonas* in her belly; yea, that quickened his dead body, and raised him with honour, not only to life, but immortality also, is he that Christ sends for his messenger, to come and satisfy the trembling consciences of his poor children on earth, concerning his love, yea, his fathers love to them for his sake. This blessed Spirit hath all the properties of a Comforter; *He is so pure and holy, he cannot deceive*; called therefore *the Spirit of truth*, Joh. 14. If he tell thee thy sins are pardoned, thou maist believe him, he will not flatter; if it were not so, he would have brought another message to thee: for he can chide and reprove as well as comfort, convince of sin as well as of

righteousness. He is so wise and omniscient, that he cannot be deceived. Never did the Spirit of God knock at the wrong doors, and deliver his letters into a wrong hand (as a man may do especially where persons are very like.) The Spirit exactly knows the heart of God to the creature, with all his counsels and purposes concerning him, 1 Cor. 2. 11. *The Spirit searcheth all things, the deep things of God.* And what are those deep things of God the Apostle means? but the counsels of love which lye deep in his heart, till the Spirit draws them forth, and acquaints the creature with them; as appears by *vers. 9.* And also he knows the whole frame of mans heart; it were strange, if he that made the cabinet should not know every secret box in it. Some few men have compassed that we call the greater world; but the little world of man (as we call him) never did any creature encircle with his knowledge, nor not the Devil himself, who hath made it his work for many thousands of years to make a full discovery of it: But the Spirit of God doth know him, *intus & extus*, (as we say) *thoroughly*; and knowing both these, he cannot be deceived.

In a word, *he is so unresistible*, that none can hinder the efficacy of his comforts. The pardon brought by *Nathan* to *David*, did not lye so close, as the holy man desired; and therefore away goes he to beg comfort of the Comforter, *Psal. 51.* where you find him on his knees praying hard to have his lost joy restored, and his trembling heart establish'd by the free Spirit of God. Though thou canst baffle man, and through thy own melancholy fancy, and the sophistry of Satan (who counts distinctions for thee,) evade the arguments that Christians and Ministers bring for thy comfort; yet when the Spirit comes himself, all disputes end: The Devil cannot chop Logick with him; no, then the lying spirit vanisheth, and our own fears too, as the darkness flees before the Sun, so sweetly and powerfully doth the comforting Spirit over-run the heart with a flood of joy that the soul can no more see her sins in guilt of them, than *Noah* could the mole-hills, when the whole earth was under water.

CHAP. IX.

A reproof to three sorts of persons that offend against this Peace which the Gospel brings.

Use. 1. **F**irst, Is peace of conscience the blessing of the Gospel? this reproves three sorts of persons.

SECT. I.

First, The *Papists*, who interpretatively deny this, in denying that any person can know in this life (unless by an extraordinary revelation) that he is a child of God, and one that shall be saved; which if true, would stave all to pieces the vessel in which the Christians joy and inward peace is kept; whence comes the peace we have with our own consciences, but from the knowledge we have of our peace with

God? Rom. 5. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, by whom we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* If the poor soul be left at uncertainties here, and the Gospel cannot resolve it, what its state is, for hell or heaven, farewell to all inward peace; the poor Christian then may say of himself, with a trembling heart, what *St. John* saith in another case of him that hateth his brother, 1 Joh. 2. 11. *He walks in darkness, and knows not whether he goes truly then it might rather be called the Gospel of fears and doubts, than the Gospel of peace.* But is that the top of the blessing the Gospel brings to Saints, which was almost the bottom of the curse that

that the Law denounced against sinners? Deut. 28. 66. that *their life should hang in doubt before them, and they should fear day and night, and should have no assurance of life.* Bold men, that dare so wretchedly disfigure the sweet face of the Gospel; making Christ in his precious promises, speak as doubtfully to his Saints, as the Devil did in his Oracles to his Devoto's. Because their hypocrisy makes them justly question their own salvation, and will not suffer them to apply the comfort of the promises to themselves: must they therefore seal up these wells of salvation from those that are sincere, and then lay the blame on the Gospel, which is due only to their own wickedness? But there is a mystery of iniquity which hath at last been found to be at the root of this uncomfortable doctrine of theirs. They are a little kin to Judas, who was a thief, and carried the bag. These have a bag too, into which they put more gold and silver, that this doctrine brings them in, than ever Judas had in his, though the doctrine of Gospel-grace to poor sinners would bring more peace to others consciences, might it be seen in its naked glory among them; yet the superstitious fear which they keep ignorant souls in, brings more money to their purses; and this lies so near the heart of their Religion, that Gospel, Christ, Heaven, and all must bow unto it.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Those are to be reprov'd who frame very unlovely images in their own foolish imaginations of the Gospel, as if there were nothing less than peace of conscience and inward comfort to be found in it; and all, because they see some that profess it who cannot shew that they have got any more peace and comfort since their acquaintance with the Gospel, than they had before, or than themselves have, who are yet strangers to it; yea, may be, discover more trouble of spirit. Such I would desire to take these following particulars (by way of answer) into their serious consideration.

First, Consider all are not true Christians that hang upon the Gospel by profession; and no blame can be laid on the Gospel, though it doth not lavish out this treasure to every one that scrapes acquaintance with it. The Spirit of God is too wise and faithful to set his seal to a blank. The Minister indeed offers peace to all that will accept it; but where the peace of the Gospel meets with a false heart, it will not stay there. *Mat. 10. 13. If the house be not worthy, let your peace return unto you.* As the Dove returned to the Ark again, when it found the earth under water; so doth the Spirit of God carry his comfort back with him to heaven from a soul that is yet in the fuds of sin, soaking in his abominations; where can this heavenly Dove find rest for the sole of her foot in such a soul? And will he speak peace to that soul, in which himself can find no rest?

Secondly, As for those that are sincere, true hearted Christians, there are several considerations which will vindicate the Gospel to answer its name, and to be a Gospel of peace and consolation.

First, Some that are sincere Christians, do not so clearly understand the doctrine of the Gospel as

others, and the want of light, of joy and comfort in their consciences, comes from that want of light in their understandings. The ignorance of the workman doth not disparage the art. *Plus est in arte, quam in artifice.* There is fulness of comfort in the principles of the Gospel, but every Christian hath not attain'd to the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, which the Apostle directs the Colossians to, as a Sovereign means whereby their hearts might be comforted, Col. 2. 2.

Secondly, Some that do understand the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, (the only foundation to build and rear up true comfort and peace of conscience on;) yet may by their negligence in their Christian course, (not walking carefully by the rule of the Gospel) deprive themselves at present of this sweet peace, which otherwise might flow into their bosoms from the promises of the Gospel. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, Gal. 6. 10.* And if so, what blame can be laid on the Gospel? Be the pen never so good, and the hand never so skilful, it will not write on wet paper; yet we do not fault the hand or pen, but paper; if the heart (though of a Saint never so eminent) be under the defilement of a present lust not repented of, no promise will speak peace to him; he is a disorderly walker, and the Spirit hath his Rod to whip such, no sweet-meats of joy and peace to entertain them withal in that plight.

Thirdly, As for those which do walk close to the Rule of the Gospel, (I mean, by a sincere endeavour) and thou feelest no such peace and comfort (as we speak of) that they have: I answer:

First, They may have it, and thou not know it. The Saints joy and peace, is not such a light giggling joy as the Worlds; *Res severa verum gaudium.* The Parlor wherein the Spirit of Christ entertains the Christian, is an inner Room, not next the street, for every one that goes by, to smell the Feast. *The stranger intermeddles not with his joy, Prov. 14. 10.* Christ and the soul may be at Supper within, and thou not so much as see one Dish go in, or hear the Musick that sounds so sweetly in the Christians ears; perhaps thou thinkest he wants peace, because he doth not hang out a sign in his countenance of the joy and peace he hath within. Alas poor wretch! may not the Saint have a peaceful Conscience, with a solemn, yea, sad countenance, as well as thou and thy Companions have a sorrowful heart, when there is nothing but fair weather in your faces? *In laughter the heart is sorrowful, Prov. 14. 13.* Sure he means the wicked mans laughter. It never looks more like Rain with them, than when it shines; their Conscience lowers, when their face laughs; so on the contrary, never more inward peace and comfort to be found in a Saints bosome, than sometimes when his face is blubber'd with tears; shouldst thou come in and hear the Christian bemoaning himself, and complaining with sighs and sobs of his sins against God, thou wouldst go home, and cry out of this melancholy Religion, and the sad condition this man was in: And yet he whom thou so pitiest can desire thee to save it for thy self, and not spend it

is vain for him; who would not part with that very sorrow (that scares thee so much) for all the joy which the World with all its gallantry (when best set forth) could afford. There is a mystery in this sorrow thou canst not unriddle; know therefore there is a sorrow and anguish of heart which ariseth from the guilt of sin, and the fearful apprehensions of Gods wrath due to sin; and another that flows not from fear of wrath arising from guilt, but from the sense of sins in-being in the Soul, that provokes the Christian to do that which is dishonourable to that God, who hath pardoned his sins to him; and this is the sorrow which sometimes makes the Saints go for sad uncomfortable creatures; when at the same time their hearts are as full of comfort from the sense of Gods pardoning mercy, as they can hold. This sorrow is but like a Summer-showre, melted by the sense of Gods love, as that by the warm Sun, and leaves the soul (as that doth a garden of sweet flowers) on which it falls, more fresh and odiferous.

Secondly, Though some precious Souls that have closed with Christ, and embraced the Gospel, be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for a while under some dissatisfactions and troubles in their own spirits; yet even then they have peace of conscience in a threefold respect: *In precio, in promisso, in semine.*

First, Every true Believer hath peace of conscience *in precio*; the Gospel puts that price into his hand, which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ; we say, *that is gold, which is worth gold*, which we may any where exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ; 'tis peace of conscience, because the soul that hath this, may exchange it for this. God himself cannot deny the poor creature, that prays on these terms. Lord give me peace of conscience, here's Christs blood the price of it. That which could pay the debt, surely can procure the receipt. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God his hand, that the debt due to Divine Justice is fully paid; the blood of Christ hath done that the greater for the Believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion, that did infallibly procure health to every one that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health; it is in him, though at present he doth not feel himself to have it; in time it will appear.

Secondly, *In promisso.* Every true Believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure Bond for, *Psal. 29. 11. The Lord will bless his people with peace.* He is resolv'd on it, and then who shall hinder it? 'tis worth your reading the whole *Psal.*, to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof; nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosome, and his conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance from God for his sins) than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the *Psal.* is spent in shewing what great things God can do, and

that with no more trouble to himself than a word speaking. *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of Majesty, ver. 4. It breaks the Cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve.* This God that doth all this, promiseth to bless his people with peace, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet could he never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace (were it not) to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? yet infinitely more sad, to have peace both in our streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty consciences; what peace can a poor creature taste or relish, while the Sword of Gods wrath lies at the throat of conscience, not peace with God himself? Therefore Christ purchased peace of pardon, to obtain peace of conscience for his pardoned ones; and accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, Joh. 14. 27.* Where you see he is both the Testator to leave, and the Executor of his own Will, to give out with his own hands, what his love hath left believers; so that there is no fear, but his Will shall be perform'd to the full, seeing himself lives to see it done.

Thirdly, *In semine.* Every Believer hath this inward peace in the seed. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart, Psal. 97. 11.* where sown, but in the furrows of the Believers own bosome, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? hence it is called *the peaceable fruit of righteousness, Heb. 12. 11.* it shoots as naturally from holiness, as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is indeed most true, that this seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some, than it doth in others. This spiritual Harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth; but here's the comfort, whoever hath a seed-time of grace pass over his soul, shall have his harvest-time also of joy; the Law God hath bound himself to, as strongly as for the other; which *is not to cease while the earth remaineth, Gen. 8. 22.* yea, more strongly, for that was to the world in general, not to every particular countrey, town or field in these; which may want a harvest, and yet God keep his word; but God cannot perform his promise, if any one particular Saint should everlastingly go without his reaping-time. *He that goeth forth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him, Psal. 126. 6.* And therefore, you who think so basely of the Gospel, and the Professors of it, because at present their peace and comfort is not come; know it is on the way to them, and comes to stay everlastingly with them, whereas your peace is going from you every moment, and is sure to leave you without any hope of returning to you again. Look not how the Christian begins, but ends; The Spirit of God by his convictions comes into the soul with some terrors, but it closeth with peace and joy. As we say of the month of March, it enters like a *Lion*, but goes out like a *Lamb*.

Mark

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, Psal. 37. 39.

The two Cisterns

SECT. III.

Thirdly, This proves those, that think to heal their consciences with other than Gospel-balm; who leave the waters of living comfort that flow from this fountain open'd in the Gospel by Christ, to draw their peace and comfort out of Cisterns of their own hewing, and they are two; a carnal Cistern, and a legal Cistern.

First, Some think to draw their peace out of a carnal Cistern. There is not more variety of plasters and foolish medicines used for the cure of the ague of the body, than there is of carnal receipts used by self-deceiving sinners to rid themselves of the shaking ague, which the fear of Gods wrath brings upon their guilty consciences; some, if they be but a little awakened by the Word, and they feel their hearts chill within them, from a few serious thoughts of their wretched undone condition, fall to Felix his physick; who, as soon as his conscience began to be sick at Paul's Sermon, had enough of the Preacher, and made all the haste he could to get that unpleasing noise out of his head, Acts 24. Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way. Thus many turn their back of God, run as far as they can, from those Ordinances, that company, or any thing else that is likely to grate upon their consciences, and revive the thoughts of their deplored state, which all their care is to forget; such a one I have heard of, that would not be present at any Funeral; could not bear the sight of his own gray hairs, and therefore used a black-lead comb to discolour them, lest by these, the thoughts of death (which he so abhor'd) should crowd in upon him. A poor cowardly shift (God knows) yet all that this wretch had, and many more have betwixt them, and a Hell above ground in their Consciences. Others, their light is so strong, and glares on them so constantly, that this will not do, but where-ever they go, though they hear not a Sermon in a Month, look not on a Bible in a Year, and keep far enough from such company as would awake their Consciences, yet they are haunted with their own guilt; and therefore, they do not only go from the presence of the Lord, as Cain did, Gen. 4. 16. but as he also made diversion of those musing thoughts which gathered to his guilty conscience, by employing them another way in building a City, ver. 17. so do they labour to give their consciences the slip in a crowd of worldly businesses. This is the great Leviathan that swallows up all the thoughts of Heaven and Hell in many mens hearts. They are so taken up with that project and this, that conscience finds them not at leisure to exchange a few words with them of a long time together. Conscience is as much hunched at, and spighted among sinners, as Joseph was among the Patriarchs. That which conscience tells them, likes them no better than Josephs dream did his Brethren; and this makes many play the Merchants with their consciences, as they did with him; which they do by bribing it with the profits of the world. But

this physick is found too weak also; and therefore Saul's Harp, and Nabal's Feast is thought on by others; with these they hope to drown their cares, and lay their raving consciences asleep, like some Russian that is under an arrest for debt, and hath no way, but now to Prison he must go, except he can make the Serjeant drunk in whose hand he is, which he doth, and so makes an escape. Thus many besot their conscience with the brutish pleasures of sin; and when they have laid it as fast asleep in senseless stupidity, as one that is dead drunk, then they may sin without controul, till it wakes again. This is the height of that peace, which any carnal Receipt can help the sinner unto; to give a sleeping potion, that shall bind up the senses of Conscience for a while, in which time the wretch may forget his misery, as the condemned man doth when he is asleep, but as soon as it awakes, the horror of his condition is sure again to affright him worse than before. God keep you all from such a cure for your troubles of Conscience, which is a thousand times worse than the disease it self. Better to have a Dog that will by his barking, tell us a Thief is in our Yard, than one that will sit still, and let us be rob'd, before we have any notice of our danger.

Secondly, Some draw their peace of Conscience from a legal Cistern; all the comfort they have, is from their own righteousness; this good work, and that good duty they bless themselves in, when any qualm comes over their hearts; the cordial drink, which they use to revive and comfort themselves with, is drawn not from the satisfaction which Christ by his death hath given to God for them poor sinners, but from the righteousness of their own lives; not from Christs intercession in Heaven for them, but their own good prayers on earth for themselves; in a word, when any spark of disquiet kindles in their Consciences, (as it were strange, if where so much combustible matter is, there should not at one time or other, some smothering fire begin in such a ones bosom) then, not Christs blood, but their own tears are cast on to quench it. Well, whoever thou art that goest this way to work to obtain peace of Conscience, I accuse thee as an enemy to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. If any herb could be found growing in thy garden to heal the wounds of thy Conscience; why did the Lord Christ commend for such a rarity, the balm which he came from Heaven on purpose to compound with his own blood? why doth he call sinners from all besides himself as comforters of no value, and bid us come to him, as ever we would find rest for our souls? Mat. 11. 28. No, know poor creature, and believe it, (while the knowing of it may do thee good) either Christ was an Impostor, and the Gospel a Fable, which I hope thou art not such an Infidel (worse than the Devil himself) to believe; or else thou takest not the right method of healing thy Conscience wounded for sin, and laying a sure bottom for solid peace in thy bosom; prayers and tears (Repentance I mean) good works and duties, these are not to be neglected; nay, thou canst never have peace without them in thy Conscience, yet these do not, cannot procure this peace for thee, because they cannot thy peace

T t

with

Notion of the peace of conscience
from the work of the Holy Spirit
can be had a person's conscience

with God: And peace of Conscience is nothing but the echo of pardoning mercy, which sounding in the Conscience, brings the Soul into a sweet rest with the pleasant musick it makes. And the echo is but the same voice repeated; so that if prayers and tears, good duties and good works, cannot procure our peace of pardon, then not our peace of comfort. I pray remember I said; you can never have inward peace without these; and yet not have it by these. A wound would hardly ever cure, if not wrapt up from the open air, and also kept clean; yet not these, but the balm cures it. Cease therefore not from praying; and the exercise of any other holy exercise of grace or duty; but from expecting thy peace and comfort to grow from their root, or else thou shut'st thy self out from having any benefit of that true peace which the Gospel offers. The one resists the other, like those two famous Rivers in Germany, whose streams when they meet, will not mingle together. Gospel-peace will not mingle and incorporate (as I may so say) with any other; thou must drink it pure and unmixed, or have none at all. We (saith holy Paul for himself, and all other sincere Believers) are the Circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3. 3. As if he had said, we are not short of any in holy duties and services; nay, we exceed them, for we worship God in the Spirit; but this is not the tap from whence we draw our joy and comfort; we rejoyce (fiducially) in Christ Jesus, not in the flesh, where that which he called worshipping God in the Spirit, now in opposition to Christ, and rejoycing in him, he calls flesh.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, They are to be reprov'd from hence, who do indeed use the balm of the Gospel, for the

healing of Conscience-wounds; but they use it very unevangelically. The matter they bottom their peace and comfort on, is right and good, Christ and the mercy of God through him in the promise to poor sinners; what can be said better? But they do not observe Gospel-rule and order in the applying it. They snatch the promise presumptuously, force and ravish it, rather than seek to have Christ's consent; Like Saul, who was in such haste, that he could not stay till Samuel came to sacrifice for him, but boldly falls to work before he comes; far against order given him. Thus many are so hot upon having comfort, that they will not stay for the Spirit of God to come and sprinkle their consciences with the blood of Christ in Gospel-order; but prophanelly do it themselves, by applying the comfort of those promises which indeed at present does not belong to them. O Sirs, can this do well in the end? should he consult well for his health, that will not stay for the Doctors direction, but runs into the Apothecaries shop, and on his own head takes his Physick without the counsel of the Physician, how to prepare it, or himself, for the taking of it? This every prophane wretch doth that lives in sin, and yet sprinkles himself with the blood of Christ, and blesteth himself in the pardoning mercy of God; but let such know, that as the blood of the Paschal Lamb, was not struck on the Egyptians doors, but the Israelites; so neither is the blood of Christ to be sprinkled on the obstinate sinner, but sincere penitent. Nay further, as that blood was not to be spilt on the threshold of an Israelites door (where it might be trampled on) but on the side-posts; so neither is the blood of Christ to be applied to the Believer himself, while he lies in any sin unrepented of, for his present comfort. This were indeed to throw it under his foot to be trod upon. David confesseth his sin with shame, before Nathan comforts him with the news of a pardon.

CHAP. X.

where we have a trial of our Peace from four Characters of Gospel-peace or Comfort.

Use 2. **L** Et this Doctrine be as a touch-stone to try the truth of your peace and comfort; hath it a Gospel-stamp upon it? the Devil hath his false mint of comfort as well as of grace; put thy self therefore to the tryal, while I shall lay before you some characters of the peace that Christ in his Gospel speaks to his people.

First, Gospel comfort may be known by the vessel it is poured into, which is a broken heart. The promise is superscribed by name to such, and such only; Isa. 57. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one.* Christs commission from his Father binds him up; he can comfort none besides, Isa. 61. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the*

broken-hearted; and what he receives himself from the Father, the same he gives to those he sends upon the same errand: First, His Spirit, concerning whom he tells his Disciples, that the Comforter when he is come, shall convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement, John 16. 7. Mark, first, of sin, and as for his inferiour messengers, they have direction, to whom they are to apply the comforts of the Gospel, Isa. 35. 3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not. And upon their peril be it, if they pour this ointment upon the head of an unhumbl'd sinner; to give such any comfort, by promising life to him as he is, God protests against it; he calls it a lye; a strengthening the hands of the wicked; and as much as in them lies, by blowing him up with a comfort, to make sure that he shall never have the true peace. Thus you see the order

order of the Gospel in comforting Souls. As in needle-work, the laid ground-work is laid before the beautiful colours; as the Statuary cuts and carves his statue before he guilds it; so doth the Spirit of Christ begin with *sadness*, ends in *joy*; first cuts and wounds, then heals and over-lays the soul with comfort and peace. I hope you do not think I limit the Holy One in his workings to the same degree and measure in all. I have open'd my thoughts in another place concerning this: but so far the convincing, humbling work of the Spirit goes in every soul before peace and comfort comes, as to empty the soul of all her false comforts and confidences which she had laid up; that the heart becomes like a vessel whose bottom is beat out, and all the water it held, thereby spilt and let out; the sins it loved, now it hates; the hopes and comfort it pleased it self with, they are gone, and the creature left in a desolate, solitary condition; no way now it sees, but perih it must, except Christ be her friend, and interpose betwixt hell and it; to him she therefore makes her moan, as willing to follow his counsel, and to be ordered by his direction, as ever Patient was by his Physician, of whose skill and care he is thoroughly satisfied; This I call the broken heart, which if you be wholly strangers to, your acquaintance is to begin with Gospel-peace. I beseech you rest not till you have an answer from your consciences; what is it they say? was your wine once water? doth your light arise out of darkness? is your peace the issue of a soul-conflict and trouble? did you bleed before you were healed? you may hope 'tis a kindly work of Gods gracious Spirit; make much of it, and bless thy God that hath given this wine to cheer thy sad heart. But if thou commencest *per saltum*, hast thy wine, before thy pots were filled with water; thy morning be come, before thou hast had thy evening; thy peace be settled, before thy false peace is broken; thy conscience sound and whole, before it is lanced, and the putrid stuff of thy pride, carnal confidence, and other sins thou hast lived in, be let out, thou mayest have some ease for a while; but know it, the Lord Jesus denies it to be his cure. *The strong mans house is kept in peace*, Luke 11. 21. as well as the *good mans*. It requires more power to work true sorrow, than false joy and peace; a happier man thou wouldst be, if mourning in the distress of a troubled conscience, than dance about this Idol, peace, which the Devil thy sworn enemy mocks thee withal.

Secondly, Gospel-peace is obtain'd in a Gospel-way, and that is two-fold.

First, In a way of obedience and holy walking, Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them*. Now this rule you may see, *vers. 15.* to be the rule of the *new creature*. And what is that, but the holy rule of the Word? to which the principles of grace planted in the soul of a believer are so fitted, that there is not a more con-natural agreement betwixt the eye and light, than betwixt the disposition of this new nature in a Saint, and the rule of holiness in the Word. Now, it is not enough for one to be a new creature, and to have a principle of grace in his bosome, but he must actually walk by this rule,

or else he'll be to seek for true peace in his conscience! No comfort in the Saints is to be found, but what the Comforter brings. And he who commands us to *withdraw from them* (though our brethren) *that walk disorderly*, 2 Thell. 3. 9. will himself surely withdraw from such, and withhold his comforts, so long as they are disorderly walkers; which they are as long as they walk besides this rule. And therefore if thou be such a one, say not the Spirit brought thy comfort to thy hand, for he would not bid thee good-speed in an evil way; No, he hath been with-drawn as a Comforter ever since thou hast with-drawn thy foot from walking by the holy rule. All thy peace which thou pretendest to have in this time, is base-born, and thou hast more cause to be ashamed of it, than glory in it. It is little credit to the wife, that she hath a child when her husband is abroad, and cannot father it; and as little to pretend to comfort, when the Spirit of Christ will not own it.

Secondly, Gospel-peace is given in to the soul in a way of duty, and close attendance on God in his Ordinances. *Now the Lord of peace give you peace always, by all means*, 2 Thell. 3. 16. That is, bless all means for comforting and filling your souls with inward peace, so that he that drives no trade in Ordinances, and brags of his peace and comfort, speaks enough to bring the truth of it into suspicion, in the thoughts of sober Christians. I know God can by immediate illapses of his spirit comfort the Christian, and save him the labour of hearing, praying, meditating; but where did he say he would? why may we not expect a harvest, as well without sowing and plowing, as peace without using the means? If we were like *Israel* in the wilderness; in such a state and posture, wherein the means is cut from us, and not by pride or sloth put from us; as sometimes it is the Christians condition; he is sick, and knock'd off from Ordinances; or by some other providence as pressing he is shut out from the help of this means or that; now I should not wonder to see comfort lie as thick in his soul, as *manna* about the *Israelites* tents; but as God would not rain bread any longer, when once they had corn, of which with their labour they might make bread, *Josh. 5. 11, 12.* so neither will the Lord comfort by a miracle, when the Soul may have it in an Ordinance. God could have taught the *Eunuch*, and satisfied him with light from heaven, and never have sent for *Philip* to preach to him. But he chooseth to do it out of *Philip's* mouth, rather than immediately out of his own, no doubt to put honour on his Ordinance.

Thirdly, Gospel-peace in the conscience, it is strengthening and restorative; it makes the Christian strong to fight against sin and Satan; the Christian is revived, and finds his strength come, upon a little tasting of this honey; but O what a slaughter doth he make of his *spiritual enemies*, when he hath a full meal of this honey, a deep draught of this wine? now he goes like a Gyant refreshed with wine into the field against them. No lust can stand before him; it makes him strong to work. O how *Paul* laid about him for Christ! *he laboured more abundantly than them all*. The good man remembered what a wretch he once was, and what mercy he had obtained;

obtained; the sense of this love of God lay so glowing at his heart, that it inflamed him with a zeal for God above his fellow-Apostles. This made holy David pray so hard to drink again of this wine, which so long had been lockt up from him. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit: Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee*, Psal. 51. 12, 13. Pray mark, it was not his liquorish palate after the sweet taste of this wine of comfort, that was the only or chief reason why he so long'd for it; but the admirable vertue he knew in it, to inspirit and empower him with zeal for God; whereas the false peace and comfort of hypocrites is more heady than hearty; it leaves them as weak as they were before, yea, it lies rotting, like unwholsom food in the stomach, and leaves a surfeit in their souls, (as luscious summer-fruits do in the bodies of men) which soon breaks out in loose practices. Thieves commonly spend their money as ill as they get it; and so do hypocrites and formalists their stolen comforts; stay but a little, and you shall find them feasting some lust or other with them. *I have peace-offerings with me*, (saith the religious Whore, the hypocritical harlot) *this day I have paid my vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee*, Prov. 7. 14, 15. she pacifies her conscience, and comforts her self with this religious service she performs; and now having (as she thought) quit scores with God, she returns to her own lustful trade; yea, emboldens her self from this in her wickedness; *Therefore came I forth to meet thee*: as if she durst not have plaid the Whore with man, till she had plaid the hypocrite with God, and stoppt the mouth of her conscience with her peace-offering. Look therefore I beseech you very carefully what effect your peace and comfort have in your hearts and lives. Are you the more humble or proud for your comfort? do you walk more closely or loosely after your peace? how stand you to duties of worship? are you made more ready for communion with God in them, or do you grow strange to, and infrequent in them? have you more quickning in them, or lie more formal and lifeless under them? In a word, can you shew that grace and peace grow in thee alike? or doth the one less appear, since thou dost more pretend to the other? by this thou mayst know whether thy peace comes from the Peace-maker, or Peace-marrer, from the God of truth, or Father of lies.

Fourthly, Gospel-peace comforts the soul, and that strongly, when it hath no other comfort to mingle with it. It is a cordial rich enough it self, and needs not any other ingredient to be compounded with it. David singles God out by himself; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25. Give David but his God, and let who will take all besides; let him alone to live comfortably, may he but have his love and favour. Hence it is that the Christians peace pays him in the greatest revenues of joy and comfort, when outward enjoyments contribute least, yea, nothing at all, but bring in matter of trouble. *But David encouraged himself in his God*, 1 Sam. 30. 6.

you know when that was; if David's peace had not been right and sound, he would have been more troubled to think of God at such a time, than of all his other disasters. *Great peace have they which love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them*, Psal. 119. 165. This distinguisheth the Saints peace both from the worldlings and the hypocrites.

First, From the worldlings, his peace and comfort (poor wretch) runs dregs as soon as creature enjoyments run a tilt; when poverty, disgrace, sickness, or any thing else crosseth him, in that which he fondly doted on, then his night is come, and day shut up in dismal darkness. In which respect it is, that Christ (as I conceive) opposeth his peace to the worlds, John 14. 27. *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*. Pray mark, Christ is laying in Arguments of comfort for his Disciples against his departure, which he knew would go so near their hearts. One among the rest, is taken from the difference of that peace and comfort which he leaves them, from what the world gives: as if he had said, If the peace and comfort you have from me, lay in such things as the worlds peace is made up of, plenty, ease, outward prosperity, and carnal joy, truly then you had reason to be the greatest mourners at my funeral, that ever followed friend to the grave; for after my departure, you are like to have none of these; nay, rather expect trouble and perfection. But know, the peace I left with you, is not in your houses, but hearts; the comfort I gave you lies not in silver and gold, but in pardon of sin, hopes of glory and inward consolations, which the Comforter that is to come from me, to dwell with you, shall, upon my appointment, pay into your bosoms; and this shall out-live all the worlds joy. This is such a legacy as never any left their children. Many a father dying, hath in a farewell speech to his children, wisht them all peace and comfort when he should be dead and gone; but who besides Jesus Christ could send a Comforter into their hearts, and thrust peace and comfort into their bosoms?

Again, It distinguisheth the true Christians peace from the hypocrites, who, though he pretends to place his comfort not in the creatures, but in God; and seems to take joy in the interest, which he lays claim to have in Christ and the precious promises of the Gospel; yet when it comes indeed to the trial, that he sees all his creature-comforts gone, and not like to return any more, (which at this time had his heart, though he would not it should be thought so) and now he sees he must in earnest into another world, to stand or fall eternally, as he shall then be found in Gods own scrutiny to have been sincere or false-hearted in his pretensions to Christ and his grace; Truly then his thoughts recoil, his conscience flies in his face, and reproacheth him for spiritual cozenage and forgery. Now soul speak, is it thus with thee? does thy peace go with thee just to the prison door, and there leave thee? art thou confident thy sins are pardoned all the while thou art in health and strength, but as soon as ever the Serjeant knocks at the door to speak with thee, (death

(death I mean comes in thy sight) then thy thoughts alter, and thy conscience tells thee, he comes to prove thee a liar in thy pretended peace and joy? this is a sad symptom. I know indeed that the time of affliction is a trying-time to grace that is true; The sincere Christian for a while may (like a valiant souldier) be beat from his artillery, and the enemy Satan may seem to possess his peace and confidence; yea, so far have some precious Saints been carried down the stream of violent temptations, as to question whether their former comforts were from the holy Spirit the Comforter, or the evil spirit the deceiver; yet there is great difference between the one and the other.

First, They differ in their causes, this darkness which sometimes is upon the sincere Christians spirit in deep distress; comes from the withdrawing of God his lightsome countenance; but the horror of the other from his own guilty conscience, that before was lullaby'd asleep with prosperity, but now being awakened by the hand of God on him, doth accuse him to have been false with God in the whole course of his profession. It is true, some particular guilt may be contracted by the Christian through negligence, or strong temptation in his Christian course; for which his conscience may accuse him, and may further imbitter the present desertion he is in so far, as from those particular miscarriages to fear his sincerity in the rest, though he hath no reason to do it: but his conscience cannot charge him of an hypocritical design, to have been the spring that hath set him on work through the whole course of his profession.

Secondly, There is something concomitant with the Christians present darkness of spirit, that distinguisheth it from the hypocrites horror; and that is the lively working of grace, which then commonly is very visible, when his peace and former comfort are most questioned by him; the less joy he hath from any present sense of the love of God, the more abounding you shall find him in sorrow for his sin, that clouded his joy; The further Christ is gone out of his sight, the more he clings in his love to Christ, and vehemently cries after him in prayer, as we see in *Heman*, *Psal.* 88. 13. *Unto thee have I cryed O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayers prevent thee.* O the fervent prayers that then are shot from his troubled spirit to heaven, the pangs of affection, which are springing after God; and his face and favour! Never did banish'd child more desire admittance into his angry fathers presence, 'than he to have the light of Gods countenance shine on him, which is now veiled from him. Oh how he search-

eth his heart, studies the Scripture, wrestles with God for to give him that grace, the non-evidence of which at present, makes him so question the comforts he hath formerly had; might he but have true grace, he will not fall out with God for want of comfort, though he stays for it till the other world. Never did any woman big with child long more to have the child in her arms that is at present in her womb; than such a soul doth to have that grace which is in his heart (but through temptation questioned by him at present) evidenced to him in the truth of it. Whereas the hypocrite in the midst of all his horror doth not, cannot (till he hath a better heart put into his bosome) cordially love or desire grace and holiness, for any intrinsecal excellency in it self: only as an expedient for escaping the tormentors hand, which he sees he is now falling into.

3: They differ in the issue. The Christian, he like a star in the heavens, wades through the cloud, that for a time hides his comfort; but the other, like a meteor in the air, blazeth a little: and then drops into some ditch or other, where it is quenched; or as the Spirit of God distinguisheth them, *Prov.* 13. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth, but the lamp (or candle, as in the Hebr.) of the wicked is put out;* the sincere Christians joy and comfort is compared there to the light of the Sun, that is climbing higher, while it is muffled up with clouds from our eye; and by and by, when it breaks out more gloriously, doth rejoice over those mists and clouds, that seem'd to obscure it; but the joy of the wicked, like a candle, wastes and spends (being fed with gross fuel of outward prosperity, which in a short time fails) and the wretch his comfort goes out in a snuff at last, past all hope of being lighted again. The Christians trouble of spirit again is compared to a swooning fainting fit, which he with in a while recovers, *Psal.* 40. A qualm comes over the holy mans heart from the thought of his sins in the day of his great distress, *vers.* 12. *Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.* But before the Psalm is at an end, after a few deep groans in prayer (*vers.* 13, 14.) he comes again to himself, and acts his faith strongly on God, *vers.* 17. *Tet the Lord thinketh on me, thou art my helper and my deliverer.* But, the Hypocrites confidence and hope, when once it begins to sink and falter, it dies and perisheth, *Job* 11. 20. *The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*

CHAP. XI.

That the Gospel alone can unite the hearts of men together in true Peace, and how the Gospel doth it.

3. WE come now to the third kind of peace, which I called a peace of love and unity. A heavenly grace this is, whereby the minds and

hearts of men, that even now jarred, and rang backwards, are made tuneable each to other, so as to chime all in, to an harmonious consent and concord among

among themselves. Thus peace in Scripture is frequently taken, as you may see, *Mar. 9. 50. Heb. 13. 14. 1 Theff. 5. 13.* Now the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, if taken in this notion also, which we shall briefly speak to from this Note.

Note. That the Gospel, and only the Gospel, can knit the hearts and minds of men together in a solid peace and love. This (next the reconciling us to God and our selves) is especially designed by Christ in the Gospel; and truly those without this, would not fill up the Saints happiness, except God should make a heaven for every Christian by himself to live in. *John Baptist's Ministry* (which was as it were the Preface to, and brief Contents of the Gospel) was divided into these two Heads; *To turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,* Luke 1. 16. *and to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,* v. 17. That is, to make them friends with God, and one another. This is the natural effect of the Gospel, where it is powerfully and sincerely embraced; to unite and endear the hearts of men and women in love and peace together, how contrary soever they were before. This is the strange *Metamorphosis*, which the Prophet speaks shall be under the Gospel, *Isa. 11. 8. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid.* That is, men and women, between whom there was as great feud and enmity, as is betwixt those creatures; they shall yet sweetly agree, and lie in one another's bosomes peaceably; and how all this, but by the efficacy of the Gospel on their hearts? so v. 9. *For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.* Indeed it is in the dark when men fight, and draw upon one another in wrath and fury; if Gospel-light comes once savingly in, the Sword will soon be put up; the sweet Spirit of love will not suffer these doings where he dwells; and so peculiar is this blessing to the Gospel, that Christ appoints it for the badge and cognizance by which they should not only know one another, but even strangers should be able to know them from any other sect and sort of men in the world, *Joh. 13. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another;* A Noble-man's servant is known as far as he can well be seen, by the Coat on his back, whose man he is; so faith Christ, shall all men know you, by your mutual love, that you retain to me and my Gospel. If we would judge curiously of Wine, what is its natural relish, we must taste of it, before it comes into the Hucksters hands, or after it is refined from its lees; so the best way to judge of the Gospel, and the fruit it bears, is to taste of it either when it was profess'd and embraced with most simplicity; and that was without doubt in the first promulgation; or, secondly, when it shall have its full effect on the hearts of men, and that is in heaven; in both these, though chiefly the last, this peace will appear to be the natural fruit of the Gospel.

First, When the Gospel was first preached and embraced, what a sweet harmony of peace, and admirable oneness of heart was then among the holy Professors of it, who but a while before were either meer strangers to, or bitter enemies one against another? they lived and loved, as if each Christians

heart had forsaken his own, to creep into his brother's bosome. They alienated their Estates, to keep their love entire; they could give their bread out of their own mouths, to put it into their Brethrens that were hungry; yea, when their love to their fellow-Christians was most costly and heavy, it was least grutch'd and felt by them; see those blessed souls, *Acts 2. 46. They sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every one had need; and they continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of bread from house to house, did eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart.* More, they are more merry now they have been emptying of their bags by charity, than if they had come from filling them by worldly traffick. So notorious was the love of Christians in the Primitive times, that the very Heathens would point at them, as *Terrullian* saith, and say, *See how they love one another;* And therefore, if less love and peace be found now amongst Christians, the blame lies not on the Gospel, but them; the Gospel is as peaceful, but they are minus *Evangelici*, less Evangelical, as we shall further shew.

Secondly, Look on the Gospel as at last in the complement of all in heaven; when the hearts of Saints shall be thoroughly Gospelized, and the promises concerning the peaceable state of Saints have their full accomplishment; then above all, this peace of the Gospel will appear. Here it put out and in, like a budding flower in the Spring, which one warm day opens a little, and another that is cold and sharp shuts again. *The silence in this lower Heaven* (the Church on earth) is but for the space of half an hour, *Rev. 8. 1.* Now there is love and peace among Christians; anon scandals are given, and differences arise, which drive this sweet spring back; but in heaven it is full-blown, and so continues to eternity. There dissenting Brethren are made through-friends, never to fall out; there, not only the wound of contention is cured, but the scar which is here oft left upon the place, is not to be seen on the face of heavens peace, to disfigure the beauty of it, which made that *German Divine* so long to be in heaven, where, said he, *Luther and Zuinglius* are perfectly agreed, though they could not on earth.

But I come to give some particular account how the Gospel knits the hearts and minds of men in peace together, and why the Gospel alone can do this; while I clear one, I shall the other also.

First, This Gospel knits the hearts of men together, as it propounds powerful Arguments for peace and unity; and indeed such as are found no where else. It hath cords of love to draw and bind souls together, that were never weav'd in natures Loom; such as we may run through all the *Topicks* of Morality, and meet with none of them, being all supernatural, and of Divine revelation, *Eph. 4. 3.* The *Apostle* exhorts them to *keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.* And how doth he persuade them, v. 4, 5, 6, 7. *First, There is one body,* but such a one as *natural Philosophy* treats not of; but a mystical one, the Church, which consists of several Saints, as the natural body of several members; and as it were

were strange to see one member to fall out with another, which are all preserved in life by their union together; so much more in the mystical body. Again, one Spirit, that is the same holy Spirit, which quickens them all that are true Saints, and is to the whole number of Saints, as the soul is to the whole man, informing every part. Now as it were a prodigious violence to the Law of Nature, if the members by an intestine War among themselves, should drive the soul out of the body, which gives life to them in union together; so much more would it be for Christians to force the holy Spirit from them, by their contentions and strifes; as indeed a wider door cannot easily be opened for him to go out at. Again, it presseth unity, from the one hope of our calling, where hope is put *pro re sperata*; the bliss we all hope for in Heaven; there is a day coming, and it cannot be far from us, in which we shall meet lovingly in Heaven, and sit at one Feast, without grutching one to see what lies on anothers trencher; full fruition of God shall be the Feast, and peace and love the sweet musick that shall sound to it; and what folly is it for us to fight here, who shall feast there? draw blood of one another here, that shall so quickly lye in each others bosoms? Now the Gospel invites to this Feast, and calls us to this hope. I might run through the other particulars, which are all as purely Evangelical, as these, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, but enough to have given you a taste.

Secondly, The Gospel doth this, as it takes away the cause of that feud and enmity, which is among the sons and daughters of men, and they chiefly two. The curse of God on them, and their own lusts in them.

First, The feud and hostility that is among men and women, is part of that curse, which lies upon mankind for his Apostasie from God. We read, Gen. 3. 17. how the ground was cursed for mans sake; *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee*, (saith God.) But, a far greater curse it was, that one man should become as a thorn and bryar to fetch blood one of another. Some have a fancy, that the Rose grew in Paradise without prickles. To be sure, man, had he not sinned, should never have been such a pricking bryar, as now the best of them is. These thorns that come up so thick in mans dogged, quarrellsome Nature, what do they speak, but the efficacy of Gods curse? The first man that was born in the World, prov'd a Murderer; and the first that dyed, went to his Grave by that bloody Murderers hand; may we not wonder as much at the power of Gods curse on mans nature, that appeared so soon in Cains malicious heart, as they did at the sudden withering of the Fig-tree blasted by Christs curse? And truly, it was but just with God, to mingle a perverse spirit among them who had expressed so false a one to him. They deserved to be confounded in their language, and suffer'd to bite and devour one another, who durst make an attempt upon God himself, by their disobedience; very observable is that in Zech. 11. 10. compared with the fourteenth. When once the staff of beauty, vers. 10. (which represented Gods Covenant with the Jews)

was asunder, then presently the staff of bands (which signified the brotherhood between Judah and Jerusalem) was cut asunder also. When a people break Covenant with God, they must not expect peace among themselves: It is the wisdom of a Prince, if he can, to find his enemy work at home. As soon as man fell out with God, behold there is a fire of War kindled at his own door; in his own nature. No more bitter enemy now to mankind, than it self. One man is a Wolf, yea, a Devil to another. Now, before there can be any hope of true solid peace among men, this curse must be reversed; and the Gospel, and only the Gospel can do that, where an expedient is found how the quarrel betwixt God and the sinner may be reconciled; which done, the curse ceaseth. A curse is a judiciary doom, whereby God in wrath condemns his Rebel-creature to something that is evil. *But there is no condemnation to him that is in Christ.* The curse is gone, no Arrow now in the Bow of threatening; that was shot into Christs heart, and can never enter into the Believers; God may whip his people, by some unbrotherly unkindness they receive one from anothers hands, by way of fatherly chastisement, (and indeed it is as sharp a Rod as he can use in his Discipline) the more to make them sensible of their falling out with him. But the curse is gone, and they under a promise of enjoying peace and unity, which they shall (when best for them) have performed to them.

Secondly, The internal cause of all the hostility and feud that is to be found amongst men, is lust that dwells in their own bosoms; this is the principle and root that bears all the bitter fruit of strife and contention in the World, Jam. 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* This breaks the peace with God, our selves, and others. If there be a fiery exhalation wrapt up in the cloud, we must look for thunder and lightning to follow; if lust in the heart, it will vent it self, though it rends peace of Family, Church and Kingdom. Now, before there can be a foundation for a firm solid peace; these unruly lusts of men must be taken down. What peace and quiet can there be, while Pride, Envy, Ambition, Malice, and such like lusts, continue to sit in throne, and hurry men at their pleasure? Neither will it be enough for the procuring peace, to restrain these unruly passions, and bind them up forcibly; if peace be not made between the hearts of men, it is worth nothing. The Chain that ties up the mad Dog, will in time wear; and so will all Cords break, by which men seem at present so strongly bound together, if they be not tyed by the heart-strings, and the grounds of the quarrel be there taken away. Now the Gospel, and only the Gospel, can help us to a plaister, that can draw out of the heart the very core of contention and strife. Here the Apostle telling us how himself, and others his fellow Saints, got cure of that malicious heart, which once they were in bondage to, Tit. 3. 3. *We our selves were sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures; living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* Well, what was the physick that recovered them? See vers. 4. *But after the kindness*

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kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. As if he had said, had not this love of God to us in Christ appeared, and we been thus washed by his regenerating Spirit, we might have lain to this day under the power of those lusts, for all the help that any other could afford us. Mortification is a work of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 13. *If through the Spirit, ye mortifie the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.* And the Gospel is the sacrificing Knife in the hand of the Spirit; the Word it is called the *Sword of the Spirit*, as that which he useth to kill and slay sin with in the hearts of his people.

Thirdly, As the Gospel layes the Ax to the root of bitterness and strife, to stub that up; so it fills the hearts of those that embrace it, with such gracious principles, as incline to peace and unity; such are *self-denial*, that prefers another in honour before himself, and will not juggle for the wall. *Long-suffering*, a grace which is not easily moved and provoked; *Gentleness*, which if moved by any wrong, keeps the

doors open for peace to come in at again, and makes him easie to be entreated. See a whole bundle of these sweet herbs growing in one bed, Gal. 5. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness.* Mark I pray, this is not fruit that grows in every hedge, but *fruit of the Spirit*: Fruit that springs from Gospel-seed. As the stones in the Quarry, and Cedars as they grow in the Wood, would never have lain close and comely together in the Temple; so neither could the one cut and polish, nor the other hew and carve themselves into that fitness and beauty, which they all had in that stately Fabrick: No, that was the work of men gifted of God for that purpose; neither can men and women with all their skill and tools of morality, square and frame their hearts, so as to fall in lovingly together into one holy Temple: This is the work of the Spirit, and that also with this instrument, and chisel of the Gospel, to do, partly by cutting off the knottiness of our churlish natures, by his mortifying grace; as also carving, polishing, and smoothing them, with those graces which are the emanations of his own sweet, meek and holy Spirit.

CHAP. XII.

wherein is shewn the difference between the peace that is among Saints, and which is among the wicked. The greatness of their sin, who are Ministers of peace, and yet stir up strife; and the reason why there is no more peace and unity among Saints in this life.

Use 1. **F**irst, This helps us what to think of that peace, and love, which sometimes is to be found among the wicked of the World. It is not true peace, and solid love, because they are strangers to the Gospel that alone can unite hearts together. What then shall we call this their peace? In some it is a meer conspiracy, *Say ye not a confederacy to all them, to whom this people shall say a confederacy*, Isa. 8. 12. The peace of some is rather founded in wrath to the Saints, than love amongst themselves. They are united, but how? no other way than *Samson's Foxes*, to do mischief to others, rather than good to themselves. Two Dogs that are worrying one another, can leave off to run both after a Hare that comes by them; who, when the Chase is over, can to it as fiercely as before. *In the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves*, Luke 23. 12. Again, the peace and unity of others, is founded upon some base lust, that tyes them together; thus shall you see a knot of Good-fellows (as they mis-call themselves) sit over the Pot with abundance of seeming content in one another; and a pack of Thieves, when upon a wicked design, jug and call one another together (as Partridges their fellows) saying, *Come with us, cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse*, Prov. 1. 14. Here now is peace and unity; but alas! they are only *brethren in iniquity*. Thirdly, where it is not thus gross, as it cannot indeed be denied but there are some that never felt the power of the Gospel, so as to be made

new creatures by it, who yet hold very fair quarter one with another, and correspond together; and that not on so base, and fordid an account, among whom such offices of love are reciprocated, as do much sweeten their lives, and endear them one to another; and for this they are much beholden to the Gospel, which doth civilize oft, where it doth not sanctifie. But this is a peace so fundamentally defective, that it doth not deserve the name of true peace.

First, It is in *cortice*, non in *corde*; superficial and external, not inward and cordial; we may say, rather their lusts are chained from open War, than their hearts changed into inward love: As the Beasts agree in the Ark pretty well, yet keep their hostile nature, so do unregenerate men.

Secondly, 'Tis *unsanctified peace*. *First*, because while they seem to have peace with one another, they have not peace with God; and it is peace with God takes away the curse. *Secondly*, because it proceeds from unsanctified hearts; it is the Altar that sanctifies the gift; the heart, the unity. *Amicus non est nisi inter bonos*. A Heathen could say, true love and friendship can only be between good men; but alas, he knew not what made a good man. When God intends in mercy to make the hearts of men one, he first makes them new, Ezek. 11. 19. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you*; the peace of the right kind, is a fruit of the Spirit, and that sanctifies before it unites. *Thirdly*, because the end that all such propound in their

their love is carnal, not spiritual. As *Austin* did not admire *Cicero* for his eloquence and oratory so much, as he did undervalue and pity him, because the Name of Jesus Christ was not to be found in him; so this draws a black line upon carnal mens peace and unity; nothing of God and Christ in it. Is it his glory they aim at? Christs command that binds them to the peace? No alas! here is the still voyce, but God is not in it; their own quiet and carnal advantage is the *primum mobile*; peace and unity are such good guests, and pay so well for their entertainment, that this makes men who have no grace (if they have but their wits left) desirous to keep up an external peace among themselves.

In a word, it is a peace that will not long last, because it wants a strong cement; stones may a while lye together without mortar, but not long. The only lasting cement for love, is the blood of Christ, as *Austin* saith of his friend *Alypius*, and himself, They were *langine Christi glutinati*.

Use 2. Secondly, Is the Gospel a Gospel of peace in this sense, as taken for unity and love? This dips their sin into a deep die, who abuse the Gospel to a quite contrary end; and make it their instrument to promote strife and contention withal; such the Apostle speaks of, Phil. 1. 15. *Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and strife*. The Gospel of peace is a strange Text, one would think, to preach division, and raise strife from; and the Pulpit as strange a Mount for to plant the battering pieces of contention on. O how strangely do these men forget their Lord that sent them, who is a Prince of peace: And their work, which is not to blow a trumpet of sedition and confusion, or sound an alarm to battel, but rather a joyful Retreat from the bloody fight, wherein their lusts had engaged them against God and one another? Indeed, there is a War they are to proclaim, but 'tis only against sin and Satan; and I am sure we are not fit to march out against them, till we can agree among our selves. What would the Prince think of that Captain, who instead of encouraging his Souldiers to fall on with united forces, as one man against the common enemy, should make a speech to set his Souldiers together by the ears among themselves? surely he would hang him up for a Traytor. Good was *Luther's* prayer, *A Doctore glorioso, a Pastore contentioso, & inanihus questionibus liberet Ecclesiam Deus*. From a vain glorious Doctor, a contentions Pastor, and nice questions, the Lord deliver his Church. And we in these sad times have reason to say as hearty an Amen to it, as any since his Age. Do we not live in a time, when the Church is turned into a Sophisters School? where such a wrangling and jangling hath been, that the preciousst truths of the Gospel are lost already to many (whose eyes are put out with the dust these contentions have raised) and they have at last fairly disputed themselves out of all their sober principles; as some ill-husbands that light among cunning Gamesters, and play all their money out of their purses. O woe to such vile men, who have profanated the Gospel to such Devilish ends. God may have mercy on the cheated souls to bring them back to the love of the truth. But for the cheaters, they

are gone too far towards Hell, that we can look for their return.

Use 3. Thirdly, This gives us the reason why there is no more peace and unity among the Saints themselves; the Gospel cannot be faulted, that breaths peace. No! it is not because they are Gospellers, but because they are but imperfectly Gospelized, that they are no more peaceful; the more they partake of the spirit of the Gospel, the less will they be haunted with the evil spirit of contention and strife. The best of Saints are in part unevangelical in two particulars, from which come all the unkind quarrellings, and unbrotherly contests among them.

First, In their judgements, They know but in part, and prophesie but in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. He that pretends to more, boasts without his measure, and doth thereby discover what he denies, his ignorance (I mean in the Gospel.) And this defect and craze, that is in the Saints judgement, exposeth them sometimes to drink in principles that are not Evangelical. Now these are they that make the bustle, and disturb their peace and unity. All truth is reducible to an unity; like lines they lovingly meet in one Center, the God of truth; and so far from justling and clashing, that (as stones in an Arch) they uphold one another. And they which so sweetly agree in one, cannot learn us to divide. No, it is this stranger, Error, that creeps in among the Saints, and will needs be Judge; this breaks the peace, and kindles a fire in the House, that in a while, if let alone, will be seen at the House-top. Wholsom food makes no disturbance to a healthful body; but corrupt food doth presently make the body feverish and untoward, and then, when the man is distempered, no wonder if he begins to be pettish and pievish; we have seen it by woful experience. Those from whom we had nothing but sweetness and love, while they fed on the same dish of Gospel-truth with us, how strangely froward are they grown, since they have taken down some evangelical and erroneous principles? That we know not well how to carry our selves towards them, they are so captious and quarrellous; yea, at the very hearing of the Word, if they have not yet forgot the way to the Ordinance, what a distasteful behaviour do many of them shew? as if every word went against their stomach. O Sirs, let us not blame the Gospel; it is innocent as to these sad contentions among us. Paul tells us where to find a father for this brat of strife; see at whose door he directs us to lay it, Rom. 16. 17. *Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned*. Where I pray observe how he clears the Gospel; they never learn'd it in Christs School; and then tacitely implies, they have it somewhere else, from some false teacher, and false doctrine or other. Mark them, saith he, as if he had said, observe them well, and you shall find them tainted some way or other; they have been warming themselves at Satans fire, and from thence have brought a Coal with them that does the mischief.

Secondly, Christians are in part unevangelical in their hearts and lives. The whole root of sin is not

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stob'd up at once, no wonder some bitter taste remains in the fruit they bear. Saints in heaven shall be all grace, and no sin in them; and then they shall be all love also; but here they are part grace, part corruption, and so their love is not perfect; how can they be fully sodred together in unity never to fall out, as long as they are not so fully reconciled to God (in point of sanctification) but now and then there happens some breaches betwixt them and God himself? And the less progress the Gospel hath made in their hearts to mortifie lust, and strengthen grace, the less peace and love is to be expected among them. The *Apostle* concludes from the contentions among the Christians at *Corinth*, that they were of little growth in grace; such as were not past the child-spoon and meat, 1 Cor. 3. 2. *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal.* Nay, he conceives this to be so clear evidence, that he appeals to their consciences if it be not so, ver. 3. *For whereas there is among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* But as grace strengthens, and the Gospel prevails on the hearts of Christians, so does love and a spirit of unity increase with it. We say, older and wiser; though children (when young) do

scratch and fight, yet when they get up into years, they begin to agree better. *Omne invalidum est natura querulum*; those that are young and weak, are peevish and quarrellous. Age and strength brings wisdom to overcome those petty differences that now cannot be born. In the controversy between *Abraham* and *Lot's* servants, *Abraham* who was the elder and stronger Christian, he was most forward for peace, so as to crave it at the hands of his Nephew, every way his inferiour; *Paul*, who was a Christian higher by the head than others, O how he excell'd in love! he saith of himself, 1 Tim. 1. 14. *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Jesus Christ:* where, saith *Master Calvin*, *Fides incredulitas opponitur; dilectio in Christo, sevitia, quam exercuerat adversus fideles.* Faith is oppos'd to his former obstinate unbelief, when a *Pharisee*; love in *Christ Jesus*, to the cruelty he express'd against Christians, when (breathing slaughter) he went on a persecuting errand to *Damascus*. Now he was as full of faith, as then of unbelief; now as fire-hot of love to the Saints, as then of cruelty against them. But that I quote chiefly the place for, is, to see how this pair of graces thrive and grow together; if abundant in faith, then abundant in love.

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to the Saints to maintain Peace among themselves, and promote it to their utmost; from three Arguments.

Use 3. **T**Hirdly, It brings a seasonable Exhortation to all the Saints, that they would nourish peace what they can among themselves; you all profess to have been baptized into the Spirit of the Gospel; but you do not shew it, when you bite and snarl at one another. The Gospel, that makes Wolves and Lambs agree, doth not teach the Lambs to turn Wolves, and devour each the other. Our Saviour told the two Disciples, whose choler was soon up, that they would be fetching fire from Heaven, to go on their revengeful errand; that they little thought from what hearth that wild-fire of their passion came, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of*, Luke 9. 56. As if he had said, such fiery wrathful speeches do not suit with the meek Master you serve, nor with the Gospel of peace he preacheth to you. And if the Gospel will not allow us to pay our enemies in their own Coyn, and give them wrath for wrath; then much less will it suffer Brethren to spit fire at one anothers face. No, when any such embers of contention begin to smoke among Christians, we may know who left the spark; no other but Satan, he is the great kindle-coal of all their contentions. If there be a tempest (not in the air) but in the spirits of Christians, and the wind of their passions be high and loud; it is easie to tell who is the Conjurer: O 'tis the Devil, that is practising his black Art upon their lusts, which yet are so much unmortified, as gives him too great an advantage of raising many times sad storms of division and strife

amongst them. *Paul* and *Barnabas* set out in a calm together, but the Devil sends a storm after them, such a storm as parted them in the midst of their voyage, Acts 15. 39. *And the contention was so sharp betwixt them, that they departed asunder one from the other.* There is nothing, (next *Christ* and *Heaven*) that the Devil grutch'd Believers, more than their peace and mutual love; if he cannot rend them from *Christ*, stop them from getting *Heaven*, yet he takes some pleasure to see them go thither in a storm; like a shatter'd fleet sever'd one from another, that they may have no assistance from, nor comfort of each others company all the way; though, where he can divide, he hopes to ruine also, well-knowing this to be the most probable means to effect it; one ship is easier taken than a Squadron. A Town, if it can be but set on fire, the enemy may hope to take it with more ease; let it therefore be your great care to keep the Devils spark from your powder. Certainly peace among Christians is no small mercy, that the Devils arrows fly so thick at its breast. Something I would fain speak to endear this mercy to the people of God. I love I confess a clear and still air, but above all in the Church among Believers; and I am made the more sensible what a mercy this would be, by the dismal consequence of these divisions and differences, that have for some years together troubled our air, and filled us with such horror and confusion, that we have not been much unlike that Land call'd *Terra del fogo*, the

Land of smoke, because of the frequent flashings of lightnings, and abundance of smoke found there; what can I compare error to, better than smoke? and contention to, than fire? a kind of Emblem of Hell it self, where flames and darkness meet together to encrease the horror of the place. But to prels the Exhortation a little closer, give me leave to provoke you by three Arguments to peace and unity.

SECT. I.

First, for *Christs sake*. And methinks, when begging for his sake I should have no nay. When you pray to God, and do but use his name in the business, you are sure to speed. And why should not an Exhortation, that woos you for Christs sake, move your hearts to duty, as a prayer put up by you in his Name, moves Gods heart to mercy? Indeed, how canst thou in faith use Christs Name as an Argument to unlock Gods heart to thee, which hath not so much credit with thy self, as to open thy own heart into a compliance with a duty which is so strongly set on his heart to promote among his people? as appears,

First, By the solemn charge he gave his Disciples in this particular, *John 13. 34. A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* I pray observe, how he prepares their hearts to open readily, and bid this Commandment kindly welcome; he sets his own Name upon it. *A new Commandment I give unto you.* As if he had said, let this command, though as old as any other, *Lev. 19. 18.* yet go under my Name in an especial manner; when I am gone, and the fire of strife begins at any time among you, remember what particular charge I now give you, and let it quench it presently. Again, observe how he delivers this precept, and that is by way of gift and privilege; *A new Commandment I give unto you.* Indeed this was Christs farewell Sermon, the very streakings of that milk which he had fed them withal; never dropt a sweeter discourse from his blessed lips; he saved his best wine till the last. He was now making his will, and among other things that he bequeaths his Disciples, he takes this Commandment, as a Father would do his Seal-ring off his finger, and gives it to them. Again, Thirdly, he doth not barely lay the command before them, but to make it the more effectual, he annexeth in a few words the most powerful Argument why they should, as also the most clear and full direction how they might do this, that is possible to be given; *As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* O Christians! what may not the love of Christ command you? if it were to lay down your lives for him that loved you to death, would you deny them? and shall not this his love perswade you to lay down your strifes and divisions? this speaks enough, how much weight he laid upon this Commandment; but then again observe, how Christ in the same Sermon, over and over again minds them of this; which if he had not been very solicitous of, should not have had so large a room in his thoughts then, when he had so little time left, in which he was to croud and

sum up all the heavenly counsel and comfort, that he desired to leave with them before his departure; nay, so great weight he lays on this, that he seems to lock up his own joy and theirs together in the care that they should take about this one command of loving one another, *John 15. 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you; and that your joy might be full.* What these things were, appears by the precedent verse, *If ye keep my Commandment, ye shall abide in my love.* These were the things that he spake of in order to his joy in them, and theirs in him, that they would keep his Commandments. Now, to let them know, how high a place their obedience to this particular command of love and unity had in his heart, and how eminently it conduced to the continuing his joy in them, and filling up their own; he chooseth that above any for his instance, in order to what he had said, as you may see verse 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another.* Observe still, how Christ appropriates this Commandment to himself. *This is my Commandment,* as if he would signifie to them, that as he had one Disciple, who went by the name of the Disciple whom Jesus loved; so he would have a darling Commandment, in which he takes some singular delight, and that this should be it, *their loving one another.* But we are not yet at the last link of this golden chain of Christs discourse. When he hath put some more warmth into their affections to this duty, by exposing his own love to them in the deepest expression of it, even to dye for them, verse 13. then he comes on more boldly, and tells them he will own them for his friends, as they are careful to observe what he had left in charge with them, verse 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And now taking it for granted, that he had prevailed upon them, and they would walk in unity and love as he had commanded them, he cannot conceal the pleasures that he takes therein, yea, and in them for it; verse 15. he opens his heart to them, and locks no secret from them, yea, bids them go and open their heart to God and be free to him, as he is to them, verse 16. And mark from what blessed hour all this familiarity that they are admitted to, bears date. *From henceforth I call not you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth.* That is from the time that you walk dutifully to me, and lovingly to one another. One would think now he had said enough; but he thinks not so. In the very next words he is at it again, verse 17. *These things I command you, that ye love one another;* as if all he had left else in charge with them, had been subservient to this.

Secondly, A second thing that speaks Christs heart deeply engaged in the promoting of love and unity among Christians, is his fervent prayer for this. Should you hear a Preacher with abundance of vehemency press a grace or duty upon the people in his Pulpit, and as soon as Sermon is done, you should go under his closet window, and hear him as earnestly wrestling with God, that he would give his people what he had so zealously pressed upon them; you would easily believe the man was in earnest. Our blessed Saviour hath taught us Ministers whither to

Go, when we come out of the Pulpit, and what to do; No sooner hath he done his Sermon to them, but he is at prayer with God for them. And what he insisted on most in preaching, he enlargeth most upon in prayer; Unity and peace was the legacy he desired so much to leave with them, and this is the boon he puts in strongly with God to bestow on them, *Joh. 17. 11. Father, keep through thine own power, those that thou hast given me; And why all this care? that they may be one, as we are.* As if he had said, Father, did we ever fall out? was there ever discord betwixt us? why then should they who are thine and mine disagree? so *ver. 21. and again ver. 23. He is pleading hard for the same mercy.* And why so oft? is it so hardly wrung from God, that Christ himself must tug so often for it? No sure, but as Christ said of the voice that came from heaven, *Joh. 12. 30. This voice came not for me, but for your sakes:* So may I say here, This ingeminated zeal of Christ for his peoples unity and love, it was for their sakes.

First, He would by this raise the price of this mercy in their thoughts; that sure is worth their care, which he counted worth his redoubled prayer, (when not a word was spoke for his own life) or else he misplaced his zeal, and improved not his time with God, for the best advantage of his people.

Secondly, He would make divisions appear more fearful and dreadful things to his people, by putting in so many requests to God for preventing them. Certainly if Christ had known one evil worse than another like to come upon his people at his departure, he would have been so true and kind to his children, as to deprecate that above all, and keep that off. He told his children what they must look for at the worlds hand, all manner of sufferings and torments that their wit could help their malice to devise; yet Christ prays not so much for immunity from these, as from unbrotherly contentions among themselves; he makes account, if they can agree together, and be in love, Saint with Saint, Church with Church, they have a mercy that will alleviate the other and make it tolerable, yea, joyous; This heavenly fire of love among themselves, will quench the flames of their persecutors, at least the horror of them.

In a word, Christ would, as strengthen our faith to ask boldly for that which he hath bespoken for us, so also aggravate the sin of contention to such a height, that all who have any love to Christ, when they shall see that they cannot live in strife, but they must sin against those prayers which Christ with strong cries put up for peace and unity, they may tremble at the thoughts of it.

Thirdly, The price that Christ gave for the obtaining of this peace and unity. As Christ went from preaching up peace to pulling down peace from heaven by prayer, so he went from praying to paying for it. Indeed Christs prayers, are not a beggars prayers as ours are; he prays his Father that he may only have what he pays for. He was now on the way to the place of payment, *Calvary*, where his blood was the coin he laid down for this peace. I confess peace with God was the chief pearl, that

this wise Merchant, Christ, brought up for his people. But he had this in his eye also; and therefore the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which is the commemoration-feast of Christs death, as it seals our peace with God, so it signifies our love one with another, *1 Cor. 10.* And need I now give you any account why our dear Lord pursued this design so close, of knitting his people in peace and unity together? Truly the Church is intended by Christ to be his house, in which he means to take up his rest, and what rest could he take in an house all on fire about him? It is his Kingdom, and how can his Laws be obeyed, if all his subjects be in a hubbub one against another? *inter arma silent leges.* In a word, his Church are a people that are called out of the world to be a praise to him in the sight of the Nations; as *Peter saith, God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his Name, Acts 15. 14.* that is, a people for his honour; but a wrangling, divided people would be little credit to the name of Christ; yea, such, where they are found (and where alas are they not to be found?) they are to the name of Christ as smoke, and dirt to a fair face, they croud and disfigure Christ; so that the world will not acknowledge him to be, who he saith he is; they lead them even into temptation to think basely of Christ and his Gospel, *Joh. 17. 23.* Christ prays his people may be made perfect in one, and mark his argument, *that the world may know that thou hast sent me;* whose heart bleeds not to hear Christ blasphemed at this day by so many black-mouths? and what hath open'd them more than the Saints divisions?

SECT. II.

Secondly, The second Argument shall be taken from your selves; for your own sakes live in peace and unity. Consider your obligations to love and unity, your relations call for it. If Believers, *Paul* tells you your kindred, *Gal. 3. 27. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Not only children of God, so are all by Creation, but by faith in Jesus Christ also. Christ he is the Foundation of a new Brotherhood to Believers. O Christians consider how near you are set one to another; you were conceived in the same womb of the Church, begot by the same seed of the Word to this new Creation, whereby, as one saith, you become brethren of the whole blood; and therefore, there should be the more unity and dear affection among you than any other. *Joseph's* heart went out more to *Benjamin*, than any of the rest of his brethren, because he was his brother, both by father and mother; if you fall out, who shall agree? what is it that can rationally break your peace? Those things which use to be bones of contention, and occasion squabbling among other brethren, Christ hath taken care to remove them all; so that of all others, your quarrellings are most childish, yea sinful; sometimes one child finds himself grieved at the partiality of his parents affection, more set on some others than himself; and this makes him envy them, and they despise him: But there is no such fondling in Gods family, all are dear alike to Christ, *Ephes.*

the
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paid
for
peace

5. 2. *Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us*, that is, for one as well as another. Christ in the Church is like to the soul in the body; he is *totus in toto*, & *totus in qualibet in parte*. Every member in Christ hath whole Christ; his whole heart and love, as if there were none besides himself to enjoy it.

Again, Among men though the father shews not so much partiality in his affection, yet oft great inequality in the distribution of his estate; though all are children, yet not all heirs, and this sows the seed of strife among them. As *Jacob* found by woful experience. But Christ hath made his Will so, that they are all provided for alike, called therefore the *common salvation*, Jude 3. and the *inheritance of the Saints in light*, Col. 1. 12. for the community. All may enjoy their happiness without jostling with, or prejudicing of one another, as millions of people who look on the same Sun, and at the same time, and none stand in anothers light; methinks that speech of Christ looks a little this way, *Joh. 17. 22. That glory which thou gavest me, I have given them that they may be one.* By glory there I would understand heavens glory principally; Now faith Christ, *I have given it*, that is, in reversion, I have given it them; not this or that favourite, but them, I have laid it out as the portion of all sincere believers; and why? *that they may be one*; that all squabbles may be silenced, and none may envy another for what he hath above him, when he sees glory is his. 'Tis true indeed, some difference there is in Christians outward garb; some poor, some rich; and in common gifts also, some have more of them, some less. But are these *tanti*? of such weight to commence a war upon, among those that wait for the same heaven? If the father clads all his children in the same cloth, it were sad to see them stab one another, because one hath a lace more than the other; nay, because one his lace is red, and the others is green; for indeed the quarrel among Christians is sometimes, not for having less gifts than another, but because not the same in kind, though another as good and useful, which possibly he wants whom we envy.

Secondly, Consider where you are, and among whom; are you not in your enemies quarters? If you fall out, what do you but kindle a fire for them to warm their hands by? Aha, so would we have it, say they. The sea of their rage will weaken this bank fast enough, you need not cut it for them; The unreasonableness of the strife, betwixt *Abraham's* heardf-men, and *Lot's* is aggravated by the near neighbourhood of the Heathens to them, *Gen. 13. 7. And there was a strife between Abraham's heardf-men, and the heardf-men of Lot's cattel. And the Canaanite, and Perizzite dwelled in the land.* To fall out while these idolaters look'd on, this would be town-talk presently, and put themselves and their Religion both to shame. And I pray, who have been in our Land, all the while the people of God have been scuffling? Those that have curiously observ'd every uncomely behaviour among them, and told all the world of it; Such as have wit and malice enough to make use of it for their wicked purposes. They stand on tip-toes to be at work, only we are

not yet quite laid up and disabled (by the soreness of those our wounds, which we have given our selves) from withstanding their fury. They hope it will come to that; and then they will cure us of our own wounds, by giving one if they can, that shall go deep enough to the heart of our life, Gospel and all. O Christians, shall *Herod* and *Pilate* put you to shame? They clapt up a peace to strengthen their hands against Christ; and will not you unite against your common enemy? It is an ill time for Mariners to be fighting, when an enemy is boring a hole at the bottom of their ship.

Thirdly, Consider the sad consequences of your contentions.

First, You put a stop to the growth of grace. The body may as well thrive in a fever, as the soul prosper, when on a flame with strife and contention. No, first this fire in the bones must be quenched, and brought into its natural temper; and so must this unkindly heat be flaked among Christians, before either can grow. I pray observe that place, *Ephes. 4. 15. But speaking the truth in love (or being sincere in love) may grow up into him in all things.* The Apostle is upon a cure, shewing how souls that at present are weak, and their grace rather wan and wither, than growing, may come to thrive and flourish; and the receipt he gives, is a composition of these two rare drugs, *sincerity* and *love*; preserve these, and all will do well, as *v. 16.* where the whole body is said to *edifie it self in love.* There may be preaching, but no edifying without love. Our times are a sad comment upon this Text.

Secondly, You cut off your trade with heaven at the throne of grace; you will be little in prayer to God I warrant you, if much in squabbling with your brethren. It is impossible to go from wrangling to praying with a free spirit. And if you should be so bold as to knock at Gods door, you are sure to have cold welcome, *Matth. 5. 24. Leave thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* God will not have the incense of prayer put to such strange fire; nor will he eat of our leaven'd bread, taste of any performance sow'd with malice and bitterness of spirit. First, the peace was renewed, and a Covenant of love and friendship struck between *Laban* and *Jacob*, *Gen. 31. 44.* and then *vers. 54. Jacob offered sacrifice upon the Mount, and called his brethren to eat bread.* The very Heathens thought no serious business could be well done by quarrelling spirits. Therefore the *Senators* of *Rome* used to visit the Temple dedicated *Jovi depositorio*, because there they did *deponere inimicitias*, lay down all their feuds and controversies, before they went into the Senate to consult of State-affairs; durst not they go to the Senate till friends? and dare we go up to Gods Altar, bow our knees to him in prayer, while our hearts are royled and swoln with anger, envy and malice? O God humble us.

Thirdly, As we cut off our trade with heaven, so with one another; when two Countreys fall out, whose great interest lies in their mutual traffique, they must needs both pinch by the War. Truly, the Christians great gains come in by their mutual commerce,

commerce; and they are the richest Christians commonly, who are seated with greatest advantage for this trade. As no Nation hath all their commodities of their own growth, but needs some Merchandize with others; so there is no Christian that could well live without borrowing from his brethren. There is that which every joynt supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, Eph. 4. 16. Paul himself is not so well laid in, but he hopes to get something more than he hath from the meanest of those he preached to; he tells the Christians at Rome, Chap. 1. he longs to see them, as to impart some spiritual gift to them, *vers. 11.* so saith he, *that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me, vers. 12.* yea, he hopes to be filled with their company, Rom. 15. 24. As a man is filled with good chear, he hopes to make a feast of their company. Now contentions and divisions spoil all entercourse among believers. They are as baneful to Christian communion, as a great pestilence or plague is to the trade of a Market Town. Communication flows from communion, and communion that is founded upon union. The Church grows under persecution; that sheds the seed all over the field, and brings the Gospel where else it had not been heard of. But divisions and contentions, like a furious storm, washes the seed out of the land, with its heart, fatness, and all.

Fourthly, You do not only hazard the decay of grace, but growth of sin. Indeed it shews there is more than a little corruption got within doors already, but it opens the door to much more, James 3. *If ye have bitter envying, and strife, glory not; that is, do not think you are such good Christians.* This stains all your other excellencies; had ye the knowledge and gifts of holy Angels, yet this would make you look more like Devils than them; he gives the reason, *verse 16. for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* Contention is the Devils forge, in which if he can but give a Christian a heat or two, he will not doubt but to soften him for his hammer of temptation. Moses himself, when his spirit was a little hot, *spake unadvisedly with his lips.* It must needs be an occasion of much sinning, which renders it impossible for a man while in his distemper to do any one righteous action. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God, James 1. 20.* Now what a sad thing is it for Christians to stay long in that temper in which they can do no good to one another, but provoke lust?

Fifthly, They are prognosticks of judgement coming. A louring sky speaks foul weather at hand. And Mariners look for a storm at Sea, when the waves begin to swell, and utter a murmuring noise. Hath there been nothing like these among us? what can we think, but a judgement is breeding by the louring countenances of Christians, their swellings of heart, and discontented passions vented from their swollen spirits, like the murmuring of waters, or rumbling of thunder in the air before a tempest? When children fight and wrangle, now is the time they may expect their father to come, and part them with his Rod, Mal. 4. 6. *He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their*

fathers, lest I smite the earth with a curse; strife and contention set a people next door to a curse. God makes account he brings a heavy judgement upon a people, when himself leaves them. If the Master leaves the Ship, it is near sinking indeed. And truly no readier way to send him going, than by contentions. These smoke him out of his own house. *Be of one mind (saith the Apostle) live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you, 2 Cor. 13. 11.* Implying, if they did not live in peace, they must not look to have his company long with them. God was coming in Moses with a great salvation to the Israelites, and as a handful of the good services he was to do for them, he begins to make peace between two discontented Brethren as they strove; but his kindness was not accepted, and this was the occasion of many years misery more that they endured in Egypt. *Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, Acts 7. 29.* And no news of deliverance for the space of forty years after, *verse 30.* And have not our dissensions, or rather our rejecting those overtures, which God by men of healing spirits hath offered for peace, been the cause why mercy hath fled so fast from us, and we left to groan under those sad miseries that are upon us at this day? and who knows how long? O who can think what a glorious morning shone upon England in that famous Parliament begun 1640. and not weep and weep again to see our hopes for a glorious Reformation, that opened with them, now shut up in blood and War, contention and confusion? miseries too like the fire and brimstone that fell from Heaven upon those unhappy Cities of the Plain.

SECT. III.

Thirdly and lastly, O labour for peace and unity for others sake. I mean those, who at present are wicked and ungodly, among whom ye live; we are not, saith Austin, to despair of the wicked, but do our utmost they may be made good and godly. *Quia numerus sanctorum, semper de numero impiorum auctus est.* Because God ever calls his number out of the heap and multitude of the ungodly World. Now, no more winning means to work upon them, and pave a way for their conversion, than to commend the truths and ways of God to them, by the amiableness of your love and unity that profess the same. This is the cummin-seed that would draw souls like Doves to the windows. This is the gold to overlay the Temple of God (the Church) so as to make all in love with its beauty, that look into it. Every one is afraid to dwell in a House haunted with evil spirits. And hath Hell a worse than the spirit of division? O Christians agree together, and your number will increase. It is said, *Acts 2. 46. They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.* And mark what follows, *verse 47. They had favour with all the people, and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.* The world was so great a stranger to love and peace, that it was amused,

amused, and set of considering, what heavenly doctrine that was, which could so mollify mens hearts, plain their rugged natures, and joyn them so close in love together, and were the more easily persuaded to adopt themselves into that true family of love. But alas, when this gold became dimm (I mean peace among Christians faded) then the Gospel lost credit in the world, and the doctrine of it came under more suspicion in their thoughts, who seeing such clefts gape in their walls, were more afraid to put their heads under its roof. Cant. 2. 7. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and the Hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor wake my love till he please.* Master Cotton on the place, *by the Roes and Hinds of the field* (which are fearful creatures, easily scared away, yet otherwise willing to feed with the sheep) takes the *Gentiles* to be meant, inclinable to embrace the Jewish Religion, but very soon scared away by the troublesome state of it, or any offensive carriage of the Jews. And what more offensive carriage than divisions and strifes? see them joyned together, Rom. 16. 17. *Mark them which cause divisions and offences.* If divisions, then there are sure to be offences taken, and many possibly hardened in their sins thereby. Do not your hearts tremble to lay the stumbling-block for any to break his neck over? to roll the stone over any poor sinners grave, and seal him down in it, that he never have a resurrection to grace here, or glory hereafter? As you would keep your selves free of the blood of those that dye in their sins, O take heed of lending any thing by your divisions to the hardning of their souls in their impenitency.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The fourth and last sort of peace which I thought to have spoken of, is a peace with all the creatures, even the most fierce and cruel. I called it a peace of indemnity and service. This *Adam* in his primitive state enjoyed; while he was innocent, all the creatures were innocent and harmless to him: The whole Creation was at his service; no malicious principle was found in any creature that did incline it in the least to rebel against him. When God sent the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air to receive names from him, it was that they should do their homage to him, and acknowledge him as their Lord; and that he, by exercising that act of authority over them (in giving them names) might have an experiment of his perfect (though not absolute and independent) dominion over them. But no sooner did man withdraw his Allegiance from God, but all the creatures (as if they had been sensible of

the wrong, man by his Apostasie had done his and their Maker, by whose Patent he held his Lordship over them) they presently forget their subjection to him, yea, take up Arms in their supreme Lords quarrel against Apostate man. And thus they continue in array against him, till God and man meet together again in a happy Covenant of peace; and then the Commission which God in wrath gave them against rebel-man is called in; and in the same day that God and the believing soul are made friends, the War ends between him and them. Hosea 2. 18. *In that day will I make a Covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven; and mark the day from whence this Covenant bears date.* In that day, that is, in the day that *I betroth thee unto me*; so that our peace with the creatures, comes in by our peace with God. And this being the blessing of the Gospel, so must that also. But as our peace with God is not so perfectly enjoyed in this life, but God hath left himself a liberty to chastise his reconciled ones, and that sharply too; so our peace with the creatures doth not hinder, but that they may be (yea often are) the Rod which God useth to correct them with. The water may drown one Saint, and the fire consume another to ashes, and yet these creatures at peace with these Saints, because they are not sent by God in wrath against them, for any real hurt that God means them thereby. This indeed was the Commission that he gave all the creatures against Apostate man as part of his curse for his sin. He sent the creatures against him (as a Prince doth his General against a company of Traytors in Arms against him) with Authority to take vengeance on them for their horrid Rebellion against their Maker. But now the Commission is alter'd, and runs in a more comfortable strain. Go fire, and be the Chariot in which such a Saint may be brought home from Earth to me in Heavens glory. Go water, waft another; and so of all the rest. Not a creature comes on a worse message to a Saint; 'tis true, they are sharp corrections as to the present smart they bring; but they are ever mercies, and do a friendly office in the intention of God, and happy issue to the Believer. *All things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. And the *Apostle* speaks it as a common principle well known among the Saints, *We know that all things work, &c.* As if he had said, Where is the Saint that doth not know this? And yet it were happy for us if we knew it better; some of us would then pass our dayes more comfortably than now we do. But I intend not a Discourse of this; let brevity here make amends for prolixity in the former.

CHAP. XIV.

The Duty of a Christian to stand shod with a heart prepared for all Sufferings, with one Reason of the point.

WE come to the third Enquiry or Question from these words propounded.

SECT. I.

Quest. What is meant by *this preparation of the Gospel of peace*, with which the Christians feet are to be shod? or thus, What grace doth this preparation, with which we are to be shod, signifie? And why call'd the preparation of the Gospel of peace?

Ans. As for the grace held forth by this *Preparation of the Gospel*, &c. I find great variety in the apprehensions of the learned, and indeed variety, rather than contrariety. I shall therefore spare the mentioning them (many of which you may find in a bunch collected by the Reverend Doctor Gouge upon the place with his thoughts upon them) and craye the boldness to lay down (with due respect to others) the apprehensions I have had thereon; which I conceive, will rather ampliate, than thwart their sense. Now what this *preparatio*, or preparation is, will best appear by considering the part it is design'd for; and that is the *Foot*, the only member in the body to be shod, and the piece of Armour it is compared to, and that is the *Souldiers shooe*, which (if right) is to be of the strongest make, being not so much intended for finery as defence; and that so necessary, that for want of it alone, the Souldier in some cases is disabled for service; as when he is called to march far on hard wayes, and those (may be) strowed with sharp stones; how long will he go (if not shod) without wounding or foundring? or if the way be good, but the weather bad, and his feet not fenced from the wet and cold, they are not so far from the head; but the cold got in them, may strike up to that; yea, bring a disease on the whole body, which will keep him on his bed, when he should be in the field: As many almost are surfeited, as slain in Armies. Now what the foot is to the body, that the will is to the soul. The foot carries the whole body, and the will the soul; yea, the whole man, body and soul also. *Voluntas est locomotiva facultas*; we go whither our will sends us. And what the shoo is to the foot, that preparation, or if you please a readiness and alacrity is to the will. The man whose feet are well shod, fears no wayes, but goes through thick and thin; foul or fair, stones or straws, all are alike to him that is well shod; while the bare-footed man, or slenderly shooed, shrinks when he feels the wet, and shrieks when he lights on a sharp stone. Thus when the will and heart of a man is prompt, and ready to do any work, the man is as it were shod and arm'd against all trouble and difficulty, which he is to go over in the doing of it. They say, the *Irish* tread so light on the ground, that they will run over some boggs, where-

in any other almost would stick or sink. A prepared ready heart I am sure will do this in a spiritual sense; none can walk, where he can run; he makes nothing of afflictions, yea persecutions, but goes singing over them; *David* never so merry as in the Cave, *Psal.* 57. and how came he so? *My heart is prepared, my heart is prepared* (saith he) *I will sing and give praise*. If *David's* heart had not been shod with this preparation, he would not have liked his way so well he was in; you would have had him sing to another tune, and heard him quarrel with his destiny, or fall out with his profession, that had put him to so much trouble, and driven him from the pleasures of a Princes Court, to hide himself under ground in a Cave from those that hunted for his precious life. He would have spent his breath rather in pitying and bemoaning himself, than in praising of God; an unprepared heart that is not well satisfied with its work or condition, hangs back; and though it may be brought to submit to it with much ado, yet it is but as a foundred Horse on a stony way, who goes in pain every step, and would oft be turning out of the path, if bit and whip did not keep him in.

Quest. 2. But why is it called the *Preparation of the Gospel of Peace*?

Ans. Because the Gospel of peace is the great instrument by which God works the will and heart of man into this readiness and preparation to do or suffer what he calls to. 'Tis the business we are set about, when preaching the Gospel, to make a willing people, *Psal.* 110. *To make ready a people prepared for the Lord*, *Luke* 1. As a Captain is sent to beat up his Drum in a City, to call in a company that will voluntarily list themselves to follow the Princes Wars, and be in a readiness to take the field, and march at an hours warning: Thus, the Gospel comes to call over the hearts of men to the foot of God, to stand ready for his service whatever it costs them; now this it doth as it is a *Gospel of Peace*. It brings the joyful tydings of peace concluded betwixt God and man by the blood of Jesus; and this is so welcome to the trembling conscience of poor sinners, who before melted away their sorrowful dayes in a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation from the Lord to devour them as his Adversaries; that no sooner the report of a peace concluded betwixt God and them sounds in their ears by the preaching of the Gospel, and is certainly confirm'd to be true in their own consciences by the Spirit, who is sent from Heaven to seal it to them, and give them some sweet gust of it, by shedding abroad the sense of it in their souls; but instantly there appears a new life in them, that they who before were so fearful and shy of every petty trouble, as to start and boggle at the thought of it, (knowing it could bring no good news to them) are now (shod with the

the preparation of the Gospel of peace) able to go out smilingly to meet the greatest sufferings that are, or can be on the way towards them, and say undauntedly to them (as once Christ did to those that came with swords and staves to attach him) *Whom seek ye? being justified by faith, we have peace with God* (saith the Apostle) *Rom. 5. 1.* And this, how mightily doth it work? *even to make them glory in tribulations.* The words opened, afford these two points.

Doct. 1. It is our duty to be alwayes prepared, and ready to meet with any tryal, and endure any hardship which God may lay out for us in our Christian warfare.

Doct. 2. The peace which the Gospel brings and speaks to the heart, will make the creature ready to wade through any tryal or trouble that meets him in his Christian course.

SECT. II.

Doct. 1. We ought to maintain a holy readiness of spirit to endure any hardship which God may lay out for us in our Christian course; Saints are sure to want no tryals and sufferings: These (as Christ saith of the poor) *we shall have alwayes with us.* The bloody sweat which Christ felt, signified (saith Augustine) the sufferings which in his whole mystical body he should endure. Christs whole body was lift upon the Crosse, and no member must now look to escape the Crosse; And when the Crosse comes, how must we behave our selves towards it? It will not speak us Christians, that we are meerly passive, and make no notorious resistance against the Will of God; but we must be active in our patience (if I may so speak) by shewing a holy readiness and alacrity of spirit to be at Gods ordering, though it were to be led down into the very Chambers of death it self. That *Epiraph* would not become a Christians grave-stone, which I have heard was engraved upon ones Tomb, and might too truly on most that dye, *Here lies one against his will.* Holy Paul was of a better mind, *Acts 21. 13.* *I am ready not only to be bound, but also to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* But may be this was but a flourish of his colours, when he knew the enemy to be far enough off; he may yet live to change his thoughts, when he comes to look death in the face. No, what he hath said, he stands to, *2 Tim. 4. 6.* *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, ardydous;* he speaks of it, as if it were already done; indeed he had already laid his head on the Block, and was dead before the stroke was given, not with fear (as some have been) but with a free resignation of himself to it; and if a malefactor be *civiliter mortuus*, dead in a Law-sense, as soon as the sentence is out of the Judges mouth, though he lives some weeks after; then I am sure in a Gospel-sense we may say, those are dead already, that are ready to dye, that have freely put themselves under the sentence of it in their own willingness. And this alacrity and serenity that was on Paul's spirit, was the more remarkable, if we consider how close he stood to his end. Indeed

some from the word, *ardydous* (which properly signifieth a libation or drink-offering) conceive that Paul knew the very kind of death which he should suffer, namely Beheading; and that he alludes to the pouring out of blood or wine, used in sacrifice, as that kind of sacrifice, which did best illustrate the nature of his death, *viz.* the pouring out his blood; which he did as willingly offer up in the service of Christ and his Church, as they did pour out their Wine in a drink-offering to the Lord. We shall now give some rational account of the point, why we are to be ready and prompt at suffering-work. The Reasons of the point shall fall under two heads. First, taken from Christ; for or from whom we suffer. The second, from the excellency of such a temper, as this readiness to endure any hardship imports.

First, In regard of Christ. 1. He commands it. 2. He deserves it.

SECT. III.

First, He commands it. Indeed this frame of spirit is implied in every duty, as the *modus agendi*, that qualification, which (like the stamp on coyn) makes it currant in Gods account, *Tit. 3. 1.* *Put them in mind* (saith the Apostle) *to be ready to every good work;* be it active or passive, they must be ready for it, or else all they do is to no purpose. The word there is the same with this in the Text and is taken from a vessel that is fashioned and fitted for the use the master puts it to; we do not like, when we are to use a vessel (cup or pot) to have them out of the way, or to mend, and scour at that time we call for them, but look to find them at hand on the shelf, clean and fit for present use, or our servants shall hear of it. Thus God expects we should keep our hearts clean from the defilements of sin, and our affections whole and entire for himself; that they be not lent out to the creature, nor broken and barter'd by any inordinacy of delight in them, lest we should be to seek when he calls us to do or suffer; or be found very unprepared, without much a-do to set us right, and make us willing for the work, as the same Apostle, *2 Timoth. 2. 21.* *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work.* Now, as God commands this readiness in all, so especially in suffering-work, *Luk. 9. 23.* *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.* These words may be called the Christians Indenture; Every one that will be Christs servant, must seal to this, before he hath leave from Christ to call him Master; wherein you see the chief provision Christ makes, is about suffering-work, as that which will most try the man. If the servant can but fadge with that, no fear but he'll like the other part of his work well enough. Now I pray observe, how careful Christ is to engage the heart in this work; he will have his servants not only endure the hardship of his service, but shew their readiness in it also; four remarkable passages are put in for this purpose.

xx

First,

SECT. IV.

First, He must deny himself, that is, deliver up his own will out of his own hands, and from that day that he enters into Christs service, acknowledge himself not to be *sui juris*, at his own dispose; whatever Christ bears, he cannot, to hear his servants (when sent by him on any business) say, *I will not.*

Secondly, He tells them the worst at first, and chooseth to speak of the cross they must bear, rather than the Crown they shall at last wear; and withall, that he expects they should not only bear it (this the wicked do full sore against their wills) but also take it up. Indeed he doth not bid them make the cross, run themselves into trouble of their own head, but he'll have them take that up which he makes for them; that is, not step out of the way by any sinful shift to escape any trouble, but to accept of the burthen God layes for them, and go cheerfully under it, yea, thankfully, as if God did us a favour to employ us in any suffering for him; we do not take so much pains as to stoop to take up that which is not worth something; Christ will have his people take up the cross, as one does to take up a Pearl that lyes on the ground before him.

Thirdly, This they must do every day, and take up his cross daily; when there is none on his back, he must carry one in his heart, that is, continually be preparing himself to stand ready for the first call; as Porters stand at the Merchants doors in London, waiting when their Masters have any burthen for them to carry. Thus Paul professed he dyed daily; how, but by a readiness of mind to dye? He set himself in a posture to bid Gods messenger welcome, when ever it came. This indeed is to take up the cross daily; when our present enjoyments do not make us strange to, or fall out with the thoughts of future tryals. The Jews were to eat the Pascheover with their loyns girded, their shooes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, and all in haste, *Exod. 12. 11.* When God is feasting the Christian with present comforts, he must have this Gospel-shoe on, he must not set to it as if he were feasting at home, but as at a running meal on his way in an *Inne*, willing to be gone, as soon as he is refreshed a little for his journey.

Fourthly, When the cross is on, what then? then he must follow Christ; not stand still and fret, but follow; not be drawn and hawl'd after Christ, but follow, as a souldier his Captain, voluntarily; Christ doth not as some Generals, drive the Countrey before him, and make his servants fight whether they will or no, but he invites them in, *Hosea 2. 14. I will allure her into the wilderness.* Indeed a gracious heart follows Christ into the wilderness of affliction, as willingly as a lover his beloved into some solitary private Arbor or Bower there to sit and enjoy his presence. Christ useth arguments in his Word, and by his Spirit so satisfactory to the Christian, that he is very willing to follow him; as the Patient, who at first, may be, shrinks and draws back, when the Physician talks of cutting or bleeding, but when he hath heard the reasons given by him why that course must be taken, and is convinced 'tis the best way for his health, then he very freely puts forth his arm to the knife, and thanks the Physician for his pains.

Secondly, Christ deserves this frame of spirit at our hands; Of many, take but two particulars, wherein this will appear. First, if we consider his readiness to endure trouble and sorrow for us. Secondly, his tender care over us, while we endure either for, or from him.

First, His readiness to endure sorrow and trouble for us; when God called him to the work of Mediatorship, he found the way laid with sharper stones (I hope) than we do in the road that is appointed us to walk in. He was to tread upon swords and pikes, all manner of sorrows, and those edged with the wrath of God; this was the sharpest stone of all (which he hath taken out of our way) and yet how light did he go upon the ground? O had not his feet been well shod with love to our souls, he would soon have turned back, and said the way was unpassable; but on he goes and blunts not; never did we sin more willingly, than he went to suffer for our sin. *Loe, I come,* (saith he to his Father) *I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy Law is within my heart,* *Psal. 40. 7.* O what a full consent did the heart of Christ rebound to his Fathers call? like some echo that answers what is spoken twice or thrice over. Thus, when his Father speaks to him to undertake the work of saving poor lost Man, he doth not give a bare assent to the call, but trebles it; *I come, I delight to do thy will, yea, thy Law is in my heart.* He was so ready, that before his enemies laid hands on him, he (as it were) laid hands on himself, in the instituting of the Lords Supper, and there did Sacramentally rend the flesh of his own body, and broach his own heart to fill that cup with his precious blood, which with his own hand he gave them, that they might not look upon his death now at hand as a meer butchery from the hand of mans violence, but rather as a sacrifice, wherein he did freely offer up himself to God for them and all believers. And when the time was come that the sad Tragedy should be acted, he knowing the very place whither the Traytour with his black guard would come, goes out, and marcheth into the very mouth of them. O what a shame were it, that we should be unwilling to go a mile or two of rugged way, to bear so sweet a Saviour company in his sufferings? *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* said Christ to Peter, *Matth. 26. 40.* Not with me, who am now going to meet with death it self, and ready to bid the bitterest pangs of it welcome for your sakes? *not with me?*

Secondly, Christ deserves this readiness to meet any suffering he layes out in his providence for us, if we consider his tender care over his Saints, when he calls them into a suffering condition. Kind Masters may well expect cheerful servants. The more tender the Captain is over his Souldiers, the more prodigal they are of their own lives at his command. And it were strange, if Christs care, which deserves most, should meet with less ingenuity in a Saint. Now Christs care appears,

First, In proportioning the burthen to the back

he layes it on. That which over-loads one ship, and would hazard to sink her, is but just ballast for another of greater burthen. Those sufferings which one Christian cannot bear, another fails trim and even under. The weaker shoulder is sure to have the lighter carriage. As *Paul*, burthened some Churches (which he knew more able) to spare others; so Christ to ease the weaker Christian, layes more weight on the stronger. *Paul* laboured more abundantly than them all, he tells us, 1 Cor. 15. 10. But why did Christ so unequally divide the work? observe the place, and you shall find that it was but necessary to employ that abundant grace he had given him. His grace (saith he) which was bestowed on me, was not in vain, but I laboured more, &c. There was so much grace poured into him, that some of it would have been in vain, if God had not found him more to do and suffer than the rest. Christ hath a perfect rate by him of every Saints spiritual estate, and according to this all are affeet, and so none are oppressed. The rich in grace can as easily pay his pound, as the poor his penny. *Paul* laid down his head on the block for the cause of Christ, as freely as some (and those true, but weak Christians) would have done a few pounds out of their purse. He endured death with less trouble, than some could have done reproach for Christ. All have not a Martyrs faith, nor all the Martyrs fire. This forlorn consists of a few files pickt out of the whole Army of Saints.

Secondly, The consolations he gives them then (in exceedings) above other of their brethren, that are not call'd out to such hard service. That part of an Army which is upon action in the field, is sure to have their pay (if their Masters have any money in their purse or care of them;) yea, sometimes, when their fellows left in their Quarters are made to stay. I am sure, there is more gold and silver (spiritual joy I mean, and comfort) to be found in Christs Camp (among his suffering ones) than their brethren at home in peace and prosperity, ordinarily can shew: What are the promises, but vessels of cordial Wine, tunnd on purpose against a groaning hour, when God usually broacheth them? Call upon me (saith God) in the day of trouble, Psal. 50. 15. and may we not do so in the day of peace? yes, but he would have us most bold with him in a day of trouble. None find such quick dispatch at the Throne of grace, as suffering Saints. In the day that I cryed (saith *David*) thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul, Psal. 138. 3. he was now at a strait, and God comes in haste to him. Though we may make a well friend stay (that sends for us) yet we will give a sick friend leave to call us up at midnight. In such extremities we usually go with the messenger that comes for us; and so doth God with the prayer; *Peter* knockt at their gate (who were assembled to seek God for him) almost as soon as their prayer knockt at Heaven gate in his behalf. And truly it is no more than needs, if we consider the temptations of an afflicted condition; we are prone then to be suspicious our best friends forget us, and to think every stay a delay, and neglect of us; there-

fore God chooseth to shew himself most kind at such a time, As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth also by Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 5. As man laid on trouble, so Christ laid in consolation: Both tydes rose and fell together; when it was Spring-tyde with him in affliction, it was so with him in his joy; we relieve the poor, as their charge encreaseth, so Christ comforts his people, as their troubles multiply; And now (Christian) tell me, doth not thy dear Lord deserve a ready spirit in thee to meet any suffering with, for, or from him, who gives his sweetest comforts, where his people use to expect their saddest sorrows? Well may the servant do his work cheerfully, when his Master is so careful of him, as with his own hands to bring him his breakfast into the fields. The Christian staves not till he comes to Heaven for all his comfort. There indeed shall be the full supper, but there is a breakfast (Christian) of previous joyes (more or less,) which Christ brings to thee into the field, and shall be eaten on the place where thou endurest thy hardship.

Thirdly, In the seasonable succours which Christ sends to bring them off safe: He doth not only comfort them in, but helps them out of all their troubles. There is ever a door more than the Christian sees in his prison, by which Christ can with a turn of his hand, open a way for his Saints escape. And what can he desire more? all is well that ends well. And what better security can we desire for this, than the promise of the great God, with whom to lye is impossible? And I hope the credit which God hath in his peoples hearts, is not so low, but a bill under his hand will be accepted at first sight by them, in exchange of what is dearest to them, life it self not excepted. Look to thy self when thou hast to do with others: None so firm, but may crack under thee, if thou layest too much weight on them: one would have thought so worthy a Captain as *Uriah* was, might have trusted his General, yea his Prince (and he so holy a man as *David* was;) but he was unworthily betray'd by them both into the hands of death. Man may, the devil to be sure will, leave all in the lurch that do his work. But if God sets thee on, he'll bring thee off; never fear a Look thee so that from his lips, when thy faithfulness to him hath brought thee into the briars; he that would work a wonder, rather than let a run-away *Prophet* perish in his sinful voyage (because a good man in the main) will heap miracle upon miracle, rather than thou shalt miscarry and sink in thy duty; only be not troubled, if thou beest cast over-board (like *Jonah*) before thou seest the provision which God makes for thy safety; it is ever at hand, but sometimes lies close and out of the creatures sight, like *Jonah's* Whale (sent of God to ferry him to shore) under water, and the *Prophet* in its belly, before he knew where he was; that which thou thinkest comes to devour thee, may be the messenger that God sends to bring thee safe to Land. Is not thy shoos, Christian, yet on? art thou not yet ready to march? canst fear any stone now can hurt thy foot through so thick a sole?

CHAP. XV.

The second reason of the point taken from the excellency of this frame of spirit.

Reason 2. **T**He second reason of the point, is taken from the excellency of this frame of spirit; which will appear in divers particulars.

SECT. I.

First, This readiness of heart to stoop to the crosse, evidenceth a gracious heart; and a gracious spirit (I am sure) is an excellent spirit; flesh and blood never made any willing to suffer either for God or from God; he that can do this, hath that *other spirit* with *Caleb*, Numb. 14. 24. which proves him of a higher descent than this world: A carnal heart can neither act nor suffer freely; *voluntas libera, in quantum liberata*, Luth. The will is no more free, than 'tis made free by grace. So much flesh as is left in a Saint, so much awkeness and unwillingness to come to Gods foot; and therefore where there is nothing but flesh, there can be nothing but unwillingness. He that can find his heart following God in his command or providence cheerfully, *may know who hath been there* (as one said of the famous *Grecian Limner*) this is a Line, that none but God could draw on thy own soul. The Midwives said of the *Israelish* women, they were not like the *Egyptian* in bringing forth their children, *for they were lively, and delivered ere the Midwives could come at them*, Exod. 1. 19. Truly thus lively and ready is the gracious heart in any thing 'tis called to do, or suffer. It is not delivered with so much difficulty of a duty as a carnal heart, which must have the help and midwifery of some carnal arguments, or else it sticks in the birth: but the gracious heart has done before these come to lend their helping hand; pure love to God, obedience to the call of his command, and faith on the security of his promise, facilitate the work, that be it never so burthensome to the flesh, yet it is not grievous to the spirit; That is ever ready to say, *Thy will be done, and not mine*. The Apostle makes this free submission to the dispose of Gods afflicting hand to evidence a sons spirit, Heb. 12. 7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons*. Observe, he doth not say, *if you be chastened*, but, *if you endure chastening*. Naked suffering doth not prove son-ship, but *καταβολήν mustav* doth; to endure it so as not to sink in our courage, or shrink from under the burthen God lays on, but readily to offer our shoulder to it, and patiently carry it, looking with a cheerful eye at the reward, when we come (not to throw it off) but to have it taken off by that hand which laid it on (all which the word imports) this shews a child-like spirit; and the evidence thereof must needs be a comfortable companion to the soul, especially at such a time, when that *Sophister of hell* useth the afflictions which lye upon it, as an argument to disprove its childs relation to God; now to have this answer to stop the lyars mouth at hand;

Satan, if I be not a child, how could I so readily submit to the Lords family-discipline? This is no small mercy.

SECT. II.

Secondly, This frame of spirit makes him a free man, that hath it; and no mean price useth to be set upon the head of liberty. The very birds had rather be abroad in the woods with liberty (though lean with cold and care) to pick up here and there a little livelihood, than in a golden cage with all their attendance. Now truly, there is a bondage which few are sensible of, and that is a bondage to the creature; when a man is so enslaved to his enjoyments and low contentments here on earth, that they give law to him (that should give law to them) and measure out of his joy to him (what he shall have) little or much, as he abounds with, or is cut short of them. Thus some are slaves to their estates, it is said, *their hearts go after their covetousness*; that is, as the servant after the Master, who dares not be from his back; Their money is the Master, and hath the best keeping, their heart waits on it, shall I say as a servant after his Master? yea as a dog at his masters foot; others are as great slaves to their honours; so poor spirited, that they cannot enjoy themselves, if they have not the cap and knee of all they meet. Such a slave was *Haman*, the great favourite of his Prince, who but he at Court? that could at the expence of a few words, get the Kings ring to seal a bloody decree for the mauling of so many thousands of innocent persons against all sense and reason of State, meely to fulfil his lust, had not this man honour enough put upon him to content his ambitious spirit? No, there is a poor Jew at the Kings gate, will not make a leg to him as he goes by, and this so royals his proud stomach, that he has no joy of all his other greatness, *Esth. 5. 13. yet all this availeth me nothing* (saith the poor spirited wretch) *so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the Kings gate*. A third sort are as much in bondage to their pleasures, they are said to *live in pleasure on earth*, Jam. 5. 5. their life is bound up in their pleasures, as the rush grows in the mud, and the fish lives in the water; they cannot live without their pleasures; take them from their feasts and sports, and their hearts with *Nabals* dye like a stone in their bosoms. Now this frame of spirit we are speaking of, breaks all these chains, and brings the Christian out of every house of bondage. It learns him to like what fare God sends; if prosperity comes, *he knows how to abound*, so, that if he be by a turn of providence thrown out of the saddle of his present enjoyment, his foot shall not hang in the stirrup, or his enslaved soul drag him after it with whining desires. No, through grace he is a free man, and can spare the company of any creature, so long as he may but have Christs with him. Blessed

Paul

Paul stands upon his liberty; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any, 1 Cor. 6. 12. I know the place is meant of those in different things concerning which there was a present dispute; but there is another sense, in which all things here below were indifferent things to that holy man; honour, or dishonour; abundance, or want, life or death. These were indifferent to Paul; he would not come under the power of any one of them all. It did not become a servant of Christ, he thought, to be so tender of his reputation, as to write himself undone, when he had not this or that; not to be so in love with abundance, as not to be ready to welcome want. Not to be endeared so to life, as to run from the thoughts of death. Nor to be so weary of a suffering life, as to hasten death to come for his ease. *Major animus dicendus est, qui arduam vitam magis elegit ferre, quam fugere, Aug.*

SECT. III.

Thirdly, This readiness to suffer as it ennobles with freedom, so it enables the Christian for service. It is a sure truth, so far and no more is the Christian fit to live serviceably, than he is prepared to suffer readily. Because there is no duty but hath the cross attending on it, and he that is offended at the cross, will not be long pleased with the service that it brings. Prayer is the daily exercise of a Saint; this he cannot do as he should, except he can heartily say, *thy will be done*, and who can do that in truth, unless ready to suffer? Praising God is a standing duty; yea, *in every thing we must give thanks*, 1 Thes. 5. but, what if affliction befall us, how shall we tune our hearts to that note, if not ready to suffer? can we bless God and murmur? Praise God and repine? The Ministers work is to preach, *woe to him if he do not*; and if he do preach, he is sure to suffer. Paul had his order for the one, and *Mittimus* for the other together; he was sent at the same time to preach the grace of God to the World, and to endure the wrath of the World for God; so God told Ananias that he should bear his Name before the Gentiles, and suffer great things for his Names sake, Act. 9. 15, 19. And if the Gospel did not please the ungrateful world out of Paul's mouth, who had such a rare art of sweetening it; It were strange that any who fall so far short of his gifts, to move in the Pulpit, and of his grace to win upon the hearts of men when out, should (if they mean to be faithful) think to go without the wages, which the world paid him for his pains, reproach and contempt, if not down-right blows of bloody persecution as he met with. And is not this shooe needful for the preachers foot, that is to walk among so many hissing Serpents? who but a Paul, that had got over the fond love of life, and fear of a bloody death, would have been so willing to go into the very Lyons den, and preach the Gospel there, where he invited death in a manner to come unto him? I mean at Rome it self, the seat of cruel Nero. So much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, Rom. 1. 15, 16.

In a word, 'Tis the duty of every Christian to

make a free profession of Christ. Now this cannot be done without hazard many times. And if the heart be not resolv'd in this point what to do, the first storm that riseth will make the poor man put into any creek or hole, rather than venture abroad in foul weather. John 12. 42. Among the chief Rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue. Poor souls, they could have been content, if the coast had been clear, to have put forth, but had not courage enough to bear a little scorn that threatned them. O what folly is it to engage for God, except we be willing to lay all at stake for him? It is not worth the while to set out in Christs company by profession, except we mean to go through with him, and not leave him unkindly when we are half way, because of a slough or two.

SECT. IV.

4. This readiness of spirit to suffer gives the Christian the true enjoyment of his life: A man never comes to enjoy himself truly in any comfort of his life, till prepared to deny himself readily in it. 'Tis a Riddle, but two considerations will unfold it. First, then (and not till then) is that which hinders the enjoyment of our lives taken away, and that is fear; *where this is, there is torment*. The out-setting Deer is observ'd to be lean (though where good food is) because always in fear. And so must they needs be in the midst of all their enjoyments, on whose heart this vultur is continually feeding. There needs nothing else to bring a mans joy into a consumption, than an inordinate fear of losing what he hath at present: Let but this get hold of a mans spirit, and once become *Helical*, and the comfort of his life is gone past recovery. How many by this are more cruel to themselves, than it is possible their worst enemies in the world could be to them? They alas, when they have done their utmost, can kill them but once: But by antedating their own miseries, they kill themselves a thousand times over, even as oft as the fear of dying comes over their miserable hearts. But when once the Christian hath got his piece of Armour on, his soul is prepared for death and danger; he sits at the feast, which God in his present providence allows him, and fears no messenger with ill news to knock at his door, yea, he can talk of his dying hour, and not spoil the mirth of his present condition; as carnal men think it does, to whom a discourse of dying in the midst of their junkets, is like the coming in of the officer to attach a company of thieves that are making merry together with their stolen goods about them; or like the wet cloth that Hazael clapt on the King his Masters face; it makes all the joy which flust out before, squat in on a sudden, that the poor creatures sit dispirited and all amort (as we say) till they get out of this affrighting subject, by some divertisement or other; which only relieves them for the present, and puts them out of that particular fit this brought upon them; but leaves them deeper in slavery to such amazement of heart, when ever the same ghost shall appear for the future. Whereas the Christian, that hath this preparation of heart,

heart, never tastes more sweetness in the enjoyments of this life, than when he dips these morsels in the Meditation of death and eternity. It is no more grief to his heart to think of the remove of these, which makes way for those far sweeter enjoyments, than it would be to one at a feast, to have the first course taken off, when he hath fed well on it, that the second course of all rare sweet-meats and banquetting-stuff may come on, which it cannot till the other be gone. Holy David, Psal. 23. 45. brings in (as it were) a death's-head with his feast. In the same breath almost he speaks of his dying, *vers. 4.* and of the rich feast he at present sate at through the bounty of God, *vers. 5.* to which he was not so tyed by the teeth, but if God that gave him this cheer, should call him from it, to look death in the face, he could do it and *fear no evil, when in the valley of the shadow thereof*, Psal. 23. 4. And what think you of the blessed Apostle Peter? had not he, think you, the true enjoyment of his life? when he could sleep so sweetly in a prison (no desirable place) *fast bound between two souldiers*, (no comfortable posture) and this the *very night before Herod would have brought him forth* (in all probability to his execution,) no likely time (one would think) to get any rest, yet we find him, even there, thus, and then, so found asleep, that the Angel, who was sent to give him his goal-delivery, smote him on the side to awake him, *Acts 12. 6, 7.* I question whether Herod himself slept so well that night, as this his prisoner did. And what was the potion that brought this holy man so quietly to rest? No doubt this preparation of the Gospel of peace; he was ready to dye, and that made him able to sleep; why should that break his rest in this world, which (if it had been effected) would have brought him to his eternal rest in the other? Secondly, The more ready and prepa-

red the Christian is to suffer from God, or for God, the more God is engaged to take care for him and of him. A good General is most tender of that souldiers life, who is least tender of it himself. The less the Christian values himself, and his interests for Gods sake, the more careful God is of him, either to keep him from suffering, or in it. Both which are meant, *Matth. 16. 28. Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* Abraham was ready to offer up his son, and then God would not suffer him to do it. But if the Lord at any time takes the Christians offer, and lets the blow be given (though to the severing of soul and body) he yet shews his tender care of him, by the high esteem he sets upon their blood; which is not more prodigally spilt by mans cruelty, than carefully gathered up by God, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.*

Thus we see, that by resigning our selves up readily to the dispose of God, we engage God to take care of us, and whatever befalls us. And that man or woman sure (if any other in the world) must needs live comfortably, that hath the care of himself wholly taken off his own shoulders, and roll'd upon God, at whose finding he now lives. The poor widow never was better of it, than when the Prophet kept house for her; she freely parted with her little meal for the Prophet's use, and a reward of her faith (in crediting the message he brought from the Lord, so far as to give the bread out of her own mouth, and child, to the Prophet) she is provided for by a miracle, *1 Kings 17. 12, 13.* O when a soul is once thus brought to the foot of God, that it can sincerely say, Lord, here I am, willing to deliver up all I have, and am to be at thy dispose; my will shall be done, when thou hast thy will of me. God accounts himself deeply obliged to look after that soul.

See how ready to Gods will

CHAP. XVI.

The number of true Christians but little, shewn from this readiness to suffer, that is required in every Christian more or less, with an Exhortation to the duty, from two Arguments.

Use 1. **F**irst, Must the Christian stand thus shod in readiness to march at the call of God in any way or weather? This will exceedingly thin and lessen the number of true Christians, to what they appear to be at the first view, by the estimate of an easie, cheap profession. He that should come into our Assemblies, and see them thrack'd and wedg'd in so close with multitudes flocking after the Word, might wonder at first to hear the Ministers sink the number of Christians so low, and speak of them, as so little a company. Surely their eyes fail them, that they cannot see wood for trees; Christians that stand before them. This very thing made one of the Disciples ask Christ with no little strangeness at it. *Lord, are there few that shall be saved?* Luke 13. 23. Observe the occasion of this question. Christ, *vers. 22. went through the Cities and Villages, teaching and journeying towards Jeru-*

salem. He saw Christ so free of his pains, to preach at every town he came, and people throng after him, with great expressions of joy that fell from many, *vers. 17. Then said he, Lord, are there few that shall be saved?* As if he had said, This seems very strange, and almost incredible. To see the way to heaven strowed so thick with people, and the means of salvation in such request, and yet but few saved at last; how can this be? Now mark our Saviours unriddling this Mysterie. *And he said to them* (it seems the man spoke more than his own scruple) *strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek, but shall not be able,* *vers. 24.* As if Christ had said, you judge by a wrong rule. If Profession would serve the turn, and flocking after Sermons with some seeming joy at the word, were enough to save, heaven would soon be full: But as you love your souls, do not boult or try

Vare there few?

try your selves by this course sieve? *but strive to enter, fight and wrestle, venture life and limb, rather than fall short of Heaven. For many shall seek, but shall not be able*; that is, seek by an easie profession, and cheap Religion, such as hearing the Word, performance of duties, and the like; of this kind there are many that will come and walk about Heaven door, willing enough to enter, if they may do it without ruffling their pride in a crowd, or hazarding their present carnal interest by any contest and scuffle. *But they shall not be able, that is, to enter*; because their carnal cowardly hearts shall not be able to strive; so that take Christians under the notion of *Seekers*, and by Christs own Words, they are many; but consider them under the notion of *Strivers*, such as stand ready shod with a holy resolution, to strive even to blood (if such trials meet them in the way to Heaven) rather than not enter: And then the number of Christian souldiers will shrink like *Gideons* goodly Host, to a little troop. O how easie were it to instance in several sorts of Christians (so called in a large sence) that have not this Gospel-shoe to their foot, and therefore sure to founder and falter, when once they be brought to go upon sharp stones!

SECT. I.

First, The ignorant Christian, what work is he like to make of suffering for Christ and his Gospel? And they are not the least number in many Congregations, they who have not so much light of knowledge in their understanding, as to know who Christ is, and what he had done for them, will they have so much heat of love as to march cheerfully after him, when every step they take, must fetch blood from them? *Nabal* thought he gave a rational Answer to *Dauids* servants (that asked some relief of him in their present strait) when he said, *Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh, that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men I know not whence they be?* 1 Sam. 25. 11. He thought it too much to part with, upon so little acquaintance. And will the ignorant person think you, be ready to part, not only with his bread and flesh out of the Pot (a little of his Estate I mean) but the flesh of his own body, if called to suffer, and all this at the command of Christ, who is one he knows not whence he is? *Paul* gives this as the Reason why he suffer'd, and was not ashamed, for (saith he) *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. Story tells us of the *Samaritans* (a mungrel kind of people, both in their Descent and Religion) that when it went well with the people of God the *Israelites*, then they would claim kindred with them, and be *Jews*; but when the Church of God was under any outward affliction, then they would disclaim it again. And we may the less wonder at this base cowardly spirit in them, if we read the Character Christ gives of them, to be a people *that worship they know not what*, John 4. 22. Religion hath but loose hold of them that have no better hold of it, than a blind mans hand.

Secondly, Carnal Gospellers, who keep possession of their lusts, while they make profession of Christ. A generation these are, that have nothing to prove

themselves Christians by, but their Baptism, and a Christian-name which they have obtained thereby; such as were they to live among *Turks* and *Heathens*, their language and conversations (did they but conceal whence they came) would never bewray them to be Christians; can it now be rationally thought that these are the men and women who stand ready to suffer for Christ and his Gospel? No sure, they who will not wear Christs yoke, will much less bear his burden. If the yoke of the command be thought grievous, that binds them to duty, they will much more think the burden of the Cross insupportable. He that will not do for Christ, will not dye for Christ. That servant is very unlike to fight to blood in his Masters quarrel, that will not work for him, so as to sweat in his service.

Thirdly, The Politick Professour. A fundamental Article in whose Creed is to save himself not from sin, but from danger; and therefore he studies the times more than the Scriptures, and is often looking what corner the wind lies in, that accordingly he may shape his course, and order his profession, which like the Hedge-hogs house, ever opens towards the warm side.

Fourthly, The Covetous Professour, whose heart and head are so full of worldly projects, that suffering for Christ must needs be very unwelcome to him, and find him far enough from such a disposition. You know what the *Egyptians* said of the *Israelites*, *They are intangled in the Land, the Wilderness hath shut them in*, Exod. 14. 13. More true it is of this sort of Professours, they are intangled in the World; this Wilderness hath shut them in. A man whose foot is in a snare, is as fit to walk and run, as they to follow Christ, when to do it, may prejudice their worldly interest. Our Saviour speaking of the miseries that were to come on *Jerusalem*, *Wo* (saith he) *unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days*, Matth. 24. 19. Because it would be more difficult for them to escape the danger by flight: The big-bellied mother being unable to flye fast enough with her Child in her womb, and the Nurse as unwilling to leave her dear Babe behind her. But many more woes to them, who in dayes and tryals, and persecution for the Gospel, shall be found big with the World, or that give suck to any covetous inordinate affection to the creatures, such will find it hard to escape the temptation, that these will beset them with. It is impossible in such a time to keep Estate and Christ together. And as impossible for a heart that is set upon the World to be willing to leave it for Christs company.

Fifthly, The Conceited Professour, who hath an high opinion of himself, and is so far from an humble holy jealousy and fear of himself, that he is self-confident. Here is a man shod and prepared he thinks, but not with the right Gospel-shoe. By strength shall no man prevail, 1 Sam. 2. 9. He that in *Queens Maries* dayes was so free of his flesh for Christ (as he said) he would see his fat melt in the fire (of which he had good store) rather than fall back to Popery, lived (poor man) to see this his Resolution melt, and himself cowardly part with his faith, to save his fat. Those that glory of their Valour, when they put on the

the Harness, ever put it off with shame. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, a very *Jacob* that will supplant its own self. He that cannot take the length of his own foot, how can he of himself fit a shooe to it?

SECT. II.

Be exhorted all you that take the Name of Christ upon you, to get this shooe of preparation on, and keep it on, that you may be ready at all times to follow the call of Gods Providence, though it should lead you into a suffering condition. Take but two Motives.

First, Consider (Christian) suffering work may overtake thee suddenly, before thou art aware of it, therefore be ready shod. Sometimes orders come to Souldiers for a sudden march, they have not so much as an hours warning, but must be gone as soon as the Drum beats. And so mayst thou be call'd out (Christian) before thou art aware into the field, either to suffer for God, or from God. *Abraham* had little time given him to deal with his heart, and perswade it into a compliance with God, for offering his son *Isaac*. A great tryal, and short warning, Gen. 22. 2. *Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac, not a year, a moneth, a week hence; but Now.* This was in the Night, and *Abraham* is gone early in the morning, v. 3. How would he have entertained this strange News, if he had been then to gain the consent of his heart? but that was not now to do; God had *Abrahams* heart already, and therefore he doth not now dispute his order, but obeys. God can make a sudden alteration in thy private Affairs Christian; how couldst thou in thy perfect strength and health, endure to hear the message of death? If God should before any lingring sickness hath brought thee into some acquaintance with Death, say no more, but Up and dye, as once to *Moses*; Art thou shod for such a journey, Couldst thou say, *Good is the Word of the Lord*? What if in one day thou wast to step out of honour into disgrace, to be stript of thy silks and velvets, and in vile Rayment call'd to act a Beggars part? Couldst thou rejoyce that thou art made low, and find thy heart ready to bleſs the most High? This would speak thee a soul Evangelically shod indeed.

Again, God can as soon change the Scene in the publick Affairs of the times thou livest in, as to the Gospel and profession of it. May be now Authority smiles on the Church of God, but within a while it may frown, and the storm of persecution arise, Acts 9. 31. *Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, this was a blessed time; but how long did it last? Alas not long, Chap. 12.* There is sad news of a bloody persecution, v. 1. *About this time Herod the King stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church; in which persecution, James the brother of John lost his life by his cruel Sword; and Peter in Prison, like to go to the same shambles. And the Church driven into a corner to pray in the Night together, v. 12.* O what a sad change is here? now in blood, who

even now had rest on every side. It is observ'd that in *Islands*, the weather is far more variable and uncertain, than in the *Continent*; here you may know ordinarily what weather will be for a long time together; but in *Islands*, in the morning we know not what weather will be before night; we have oftentimes Summer and Winter in the same day, and all this is imputed to the near neighbourhood of the Sea that surrounds them. The Saints in Heaven, they live (as I may so say) on the *Continent*. A blessed constancy of peace and rest there enjoyed. They may know by what peace and bliss they have at present, what they shall have to Eternity; but here below, the Church of Christ is as a floating Island, compassed with the World (I mean men of the World) as with a Sea; And these sometimes blow hot, and sometimes cold; sometimes they are still and peaceable, and sometimes enraged and cruel; even as God binds up, or lets loose their wrath. Now Christian, doth it not behove thee to be always in a readines? when thou knowest not but the next moment the wind may turn into the cold corner, and the times which now favour the Gospel, so as to fill the Sails of thy profession with all encouragement, may on a sudden blow full on thy face, and oppose it as much, as it did before countenance it?

Secondly, Consider if thy feet be not shod with a preparation to suffer for Christ here on earth, thy head cannot be crown'd in Heaven, Rom. 8. 17. *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joynt-heirs with Christ.* Now mark the following words, *If so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together;* 'tis true, all the Saints do not dye Martyrs at a stake, but every Saint must have a Spirit of Martyrdom (as I may so call it) a heart prepared for suffering. God never intended *Isaac* should be sacrificed, yet he will have *Abraham* lay the knife to his throat. Thus God will have us lay our neck on the block, and be (as *Paul* said of himself) *bound in the Spirit*, under a sincere purpose of heart to give up our selves to his will and pleasure, which is called *a presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God*, Rom. 12. 1. That as the Jew brought the beast alive, and presented it freely before him to be done withal as God had commanded; so we are to present our bodies before God to be disposed of as he commands, both in active and passive obedience. He that refuseth to suffer for Christ, refuseth also to reign with Christ. The putting off the shooe among the Jews, was a sign of a mans putting off the right of an inheritance, Deut. 25. 9, 10. Thus did *Elimelech* Kinsman, when he renounced and disclaimed any right that he might have in his Estate, he drew off his shooe, Ruth 4. 7, 8. O Christian, take heed of putting off thy Gospel-shooe; by this thou dost disclaim thy right in Heavens inheritance, no portion is there laid up for any that will not suffer for Christ. The persecutions which the Saints endure for the Gospel, are made by *Paul* an evident token to them of salvation, and that of God, Phil. 1. 28. Surely then the denying Christ

to escape suffering, is a sad token of perdition. O Sirs, is not Heavens inheritance worth enduring a little trouble for it? *Naboths Vineyard* was no great matter, yet rather than he would (not lose it, but) sell it to its worth, or change it for a better in another place, he chose to lay his life at stake by provoking a mighty King. Thou canst Christian, venture no more for thy heavenly inheritance, than he paid for refusing to alienate his petty patrimony of an Acre or two of land (thy

temporal life I mean.) And besides the odds between his Vineyard on Earth, and thy Paradise in Heaven (which is infinite, and suffers no proportion;) Thou hast this advantage also of him in thy sufferings for Christ. When *Naboth* lost his life, he lost his inheritance also, that he so strove to keep; but thy persecuting enemies shall do thee this friendly office against their wills, that when they dispossess thee of thy life, they shall help thee into possession of thy inheritance.

CHAP. XVII.

Six Directions for the helping on of this spiritual shoe.

Quest. **T**He great Question I now expect to fall from thy mouth (Christian) is, not how thou mayest escape these troubles and tryals which (as the *evil Genius* of the Gospel) do always attend it; but rather, how thou mayest get this shoe on, thy heart ready for a march, to go and meet them when they come, and chearfully wade through them, whatever they be, or how long soever they stay with thee?

Ans. This is a question well-becoming a Christian-souldier; to ask for Armour wherewith he may fight, whereas the Coward throws away his Armour, and asks whither he may flee. I shall therefore give the best counsel I can in these few particulars.

SECT. I.

First, Look carefully to the ground of thy active obedience, that it be sound and sincere. The same right principles whereby the sincere soul acts for Christ, will carry him to suffer for Christ, when a call from God comes with such an errand. *The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battel*, Psal. 78. 9. Why? what is the matter? so well armed, and yet so cowardly? This seems strange, read the precedent verse, and you will cease wondering: they are called there, *A generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God*. Let the Armour be what it will, yea if Souldiers were in a Castle whose foundation were Rock, and walls brags; yet if their hearts be not right to their Prince, an easie storm will drive them from the walls, and a little scare open their gate, which hath not this bolt of sincerity on it to hold it fast. In our late Wars we have seen that honest hearts within thin and weak works, have held the Town, when no walls could defend treachery from betraying trust. O labour for sincerity in the engaging at first for God and his Gospel. Be oft asking thy own soul for whom thou prayest, hearest, reformest this practice, and that. If thou canst get a satisfactory answer from thy soul

here, thou mayst hope well, if faiths working hand be sincere, then its fighting hand will be valiant. That place is observable, *Hebr. 11. 33. Who through faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of Lyons, quenched the violence of fire*; and with other great things that faith enabled them to endure, as you may read in the 34, 35, 36. verses, Where I pray note, how the power of faith enabling the Christian to work righteousness (that is, live holily and righteously) is reckon'd among the wonders of sufferings, which it strengthened them to endure. Indeed had it not done this, it would never have endured these.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Pray for a suffering spirit; this is not a common gift, which every carnal Gospeller, and slighty professor hath. No, it is a peculiar gift, and bestowed but on a few sincere souls; *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. 1. 20. All the parts and common gifts that a man hath, will never enable him to drink deep of this Cup for Christ; such is the pride of mans heart, he had rather suffer any way than this; rather from himself, and for himself, than from Christ, or for Christ; you would wonder to see sometimes how much a Child will endure at his play, and never cry for it; this fall, and that knock, and no great matter is made of it by him, because got in a way that is pleasing to him; but let his father whip him, though is puts him not to half the smart, yet he roars and takes on, that there is no quieting of him. Thus men can bring trouble on themselves, and bite in their complaints. They can, one play away his Estate at Cards and Dice, and another whore away his health, or cut off many years from his life by beastly drunkenness, and all is endured patiently; yea, if they had their money and strength again, they should go the same way; they do not repent of what their lusts have cost them, but mourn they have no more to bestow upon them; their

lusts shall have all they have to a morsel of bread in their Cupboard, and drop of blood in their veins; yea, they are not afraid of burning in Hell, as their sins *Martyrs*. But come, and ask these, that are so free of their purse, flesh, soul, and all, in lusts service, to lay their estate or life for a few moments at stake in Christs cause and his truths; and you shall see that God is not so much beholden to them. And therefore pray and pray again for a suffering spirit in Christs cause; yea, Saints themselves need earnestly plead with God for this. Alas! they do not find suffering work follow their hand so easily. The flesh loves to be cockered, not crucifi'd; many a groan it costs the Christian, before he can learn to love this work. Now prayer, if any means, will be helpful to thee in this particular. He that can wrestle with God, need not fear the face of death and danger. Prayer engageth Gods strength and wisdom for our help; and what is too hard for the creature, that hath God at his back for his help, to do or suffer? We are bid to *count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations*, Jam. 1. 2. Not temptations to sin, but for righteousness; he means troubles for Christ and his Gospel: Ah! but might the poor Christian say, it were cause of more joy to be able to stand under these temptations, than to fall into them. Little joy would it be to have the temptation, and not the grace to endure temptation. True indeed; but for thy comfort, Christian, he that leads thee into this temptation, stands ready to help thee through it; Therefore, v. 5. there is a gracious, *si quis*, set up; *If any of you (i. e. you sufferers chiefly) lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* This methinks, should not much strain our faith to believe. There are not many Masters so disingenuous to be found, that would twit and upbraid their servant for asking humbly their counsel in a work of peril and difficulty, which they cheerfully undertake out of love to their persons and obedience to their command; how much less needst

The Proverb
Indeed is, *He*
that would
learn to pray, let
him go to sea.
But I think it
were better
thus, *He that*
would go to sea
(this I mean of
suffering) let
him learn to
pray, before he
comes there.

work come, thou wilt be able to do little at that weapon then.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, Be much in the meditation of a suffering state. He'll say his Lesson best, when his Master calls him forth, that is ofteneft conning it

over before-hand to himself; do by the troubles thou mayst meet with, as *Porters* use to do with their burdens, they will lift them again and again, before they take them on to their back. Thus do thou, be often lifting up in thy meditations those evils that may befall thee for Christ and his truth; and try how thou couldst fadge with them, if called to endure them; set poverty, prison, banishment, fire and fagot before thee on the one hand, and the precious truths of Christ on the other, with the sweet promises made to those that shall hold fast the word of patience held forth in such an hour of temptation. Suppose it were now thy very case, and thou wert put to thy choice, which hand thou wouldst take; study the question seriously, till thou determinest it clearly in thy conscience; and do this often, that the Arguments which flesh and blood will then be sure to use for thy pitying thy self, may not be new and unanswered; nor the encouragements and strong consolations, which the Word affords, be strange, and under any suspicion in thy thoughts, when thou art to venture thy life upon their credit and truth. That of *Augustine* we shall find most true, *Non facile invenimur praesidia in adversitate, quoniam non fuerint in pace quaesita.* The promises are our *Garrison* and fastness at such time; and we shall not find it easie to run to them in a streight, except we were acquainted with them in a time of peace; a stranger that flies to a house for Refuge in the dark night, he fumbles about the door, and knows not how to find the latch; his enemy, if night, may kill him before he can open the door; but one that lives in the house, or is well acquainted with it, is not long a getting in. *Come my people* (saith God) *enter thou into thy chambers*, Isa. 26. He is shewing them their lodgings in his attributes and promises, before it is night, and their sufferings be come, that they may readily find the way to them in the dark.

S E C T. IV.

Fourthly, Make a daily resignation of thy self up to the Will of God. Indeed this should be, as it were, the lock of the night, and key of the morning; we should open and shut our eyes with this recommending of our selves into the hands of God. This if daily perform'd, not formally (as all duties frequently repeated, without the more care are like to be) but solemnly, would sweetly dispose the soul for a welcoming of any tryal that can befall him. The awkwardness of our hearts to suffer, comes much from distrust. An unbelieving soul treads upon the promise, as a man upon ice; At first going upon it, it is full of fears and tumultuous thoughts, lest it should crack; now this daily resignation of thy heart, as it will give thee an occasion of conversing more with the thoughts of Gods power, faithfulness, and other of his attributes (for want of familiarity with which, jealousies arise in our hearts when put to any great plunge) so also it will furnish thee with many experiences of the reality both of his attributes and promises;

promises; which though they need not any testimony from sense, to gain them credit with us, yet so much are we made of sense, so childish and weak is our faith, that we find our hearts much helpt by those experiences we have had, to rely on him for the future. Look therefore carefully to this, every morning *leave thy self* and ways in Gods hand, as the phrase is, *Psal. 10. 14.* And at night look again, how well God hath lookt to his trust, and sleep not till thou hast affected thy heart with his faithfulness, and laid a stronger charge on thy heart to trust it self again in Gods keeping in the night. And when any breach is made, and seeming loss befalls thee in any enjoyment, which thou hast by faith ensured of thy God, observe how God fills up that breach, and makes up that loss to thee; and rest not, till thou hast fully vindicated the good Name of God to thy own heart; be sure thou let'st no discontent or dissatisfaction lie upon thy spirit at Gods dealings; but chide thy heart for it, as *David* did his, *Psal. 42.* And thus doing, with Gods blessing, thou shalt keep thy faith in breath for a longer Race, when called to run it.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Make self-denial appear as rational and reasonable as thou canst to thy soul; the stronger the understanding is able to reason for the equity and rationality of any work or duty, the more readily and cheerfully (if the heart be honest and sincere) is it done; suppose Christian, thy God should call for thy Estate, liberty, yea, life and all, can it seem unreasonable to thee? especially,

First, If thou considerest that he bids thee deliver his own, not thy own. He lent thee these, but he never gave away the propriety of them from himself; dost thou wrong thy neighbour, to call for that money thou lent'st him a year or two past? no sure; thou thinkest he hath reason to thank thee for lending it to him, but none to complain for calling it from him.

Secondly, Consider, he doth not, indeed cannot bid thee deny so much for him, as he hath done for thee. Is Reproach for Christ so intolerable, that thy proud spirit cannot brook it? why, who art thou? what great House comest thou from? see one, that had more honour to lay at stake than I hope thou dar'est pretend to; *Jesus Christ, Who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation.* Is it pain and torment thou art afraid of? O look up to the Cross where the Lord of life hung for thy sins: And thou wilt take up thy own Cross more willingly, and thank God too, that he hath made thine so light and easie, when he provided one so heavy and tormenting for his beloved Son.

Thirdly, Consider whatever God calls thee to deny for his truth, it is not more than he can recompence. *Moses* saw this, and that made him leap out of his honours and riches into the reproach of Christ, *For he had respect to the recompence of re-*

ward, *Heb. 11. 26.* It is much that a man will deny himself in, for something his heart strongly desires in this life. If a man be greedy of gain, he will deny himself of half the nights sleep, to plot in his bed, or rise early from it to be at his work, he will eat homely fare, go in vile rayment, dwell in a smoky hole (as we see in *London*) for the convenience of a shop, how men of quality will crowd themselves up into a little corner, though to the prejudice of their healths, and hazard sometimes of their lives, yet hope of gain recompenceth all. And now put their gains into the scale with thine (Christian) that art sure to come in by denying thy self for Christ, (which theirs are not) and ask thy soul, whether it blush not to see them so freely deny themselves of the comfort of their lives for an imaginary, uncertain, at best a short advantage, while thou hudlest so with Christ for a few outward enjoyments, which shall be paid thee over an hundred fold here, and beyond what thou canst now conceive, when thou comest to Heavens glory?

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, Labour to carry on the work of mortification every day, to further degrees than other. 'Tis the sap in the wood that makes it hard to burn, and corruption un-mortified that makes the Christian loth to suffer; dry'd wood will not kindle sooner, than a heart dried and mortified to the lusts of the world, will endure any thing for Christ. The *Apostle* speaks of some that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, *Heb. 11. 35.* They did not like the world so well, as being so far on their journey to heaven (though in hard way) to be willing to come back to live in it any longer. Take heed Christian, of leaving any worldly lust un-mortified in thy soul; this will never consent thou shouldest endure much for Christ; few ships sink at Sea; they are the rocks and shelves that split them; couldst thou get off the rocks of pride and unbelief, and scape knocking on the sands of fear of man, love of the world, and the like lusts; thou would'st do well enough in the greatest storm that can overtake thee in the sea of this world. If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for his Masters use, and prepared unto every good work, *2 Tim. 2. 21.* O that we knew the heaven that is in a mortified soul! one that is crucified to the world, and lusts of it; He hath the advantage of any other in doing or suffering for Christ, and enjoying Christ in both. A mortified soul lives out of all noise and disturbance from those carnal passions which put all out of quiet where they come. When the mortified soul goes to duty, here are not those rude and unmannerly intrusions of impertinent, carnal, yea, sinful thoughts between him and his God. Is he to go to Prison? here is not such weeping and taking on; no lust to hang about his leggs, and break his heart with its insinuations; no self-love to entreat him that he would pity himself; his heart is free, got out of the acquaintance of these troublers

of his peace, and a Prison to him, if he may go upon so honourable an errand, as testifying to the truth is; O how welcom is it to him! whereas an unmortified heart is wedg'd in with so great acquaintance and kindred (as I may so say) which his heart hath in the world, that it is impossible to get out of their embraces into any willingness to suffer. A man that comes into an Inn in a strange place, he may rise at what time he pleaseth, and be gone as early as he pleaseth in the morning; there are none entreat him to stay. But hard to get out of a friends house; these like the *Levirus* father-in-law, will be desiring him to stay one day, and then one more, and another after that. The mortified soul is the stranger; he meets with no disturbance (I mean comparatively) in his journey to heaven, while the unmortified one is liuk'd in fast enough for getting on his journey in haste, especially so long as the flesh hath so fair an excuse as the foulness of the way or weather, any hardship likely to be endured for his profession. I have read of one of the *Cato's*, that in his old age he withdrew himself from *Rome* to his Countrey-

house, that he might spend his elder years free from care and trouble. And all the *Romans* as they rode by his house, used to say, *Iste solus scit vivere; This man alone knows how to live.* I know not what *Art Cato* had to disburden himself (by his retiring) of the worlds cares; I am sure, a man may go into the Countrey, and yet not leave the City behind him; his mind may be in a crowd, while his body is in the solitude of a wilderness. Alas poor man! he was a stranger to the Gospel; had he been but acquainted with this, it could have shewn him a way out of the worlds crowd, in the midst of *Rome* it self, and that is by mortifying his heart to the world both in the pleasures and troubles of it; and then that high commendation might have been given him without an *hyperbole*; for to speak truth, He only knows aright how to live in the world, that hath learnt to dye to the world. And so much for the first Point; which was, that the Christian is to stand ready for all trials and troubles that may befall. The second follows, which is—

CHAP. XVIII.

Sheweth who is the person that is shod and prepared for Sufferings, i. e. he that hath the Gospels peace in his bosome; and how this Peace doth prepare for Suffering, with a brief Application of all.

Gospel ✓ **Doct. 2.** **T**HAT he who enjoys the peace of the Gospel in his bosome, is the person, and the only person, that stands shod for all ways, prepared for all troubles and tryals.

SECT. I

✓ First, None can make a shooe to the creatures foot, so as he shall go easie on hard way, but Christ; he can do it to the creatures full content; and how doth he it? Truly no other way, than by underlaying it; or if you will, lining it with the peace of the Gospel; What though the way be set with sharp stones? if this shooe go between the Christians foot and them, they cannot much be felt. *Solomon* tells us, *The ways of wisdom (that is Christ) are ways of pleasantness.* But how so, when some of them are ways of suffering? the next words resolve us, *And all her paths are peace,* Prov. 3. 17. where there is peace, such peace as peace with God and conscience, there can want no pleasure. *David* goes merry to bed, when he hath nothing to supper, but the gladness that God by this puts into his heart, and promiseth himself a better nights rest than any of them all, that are feasted with the worlds cheer, Psal. 47. 8. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep.* This same peace with God enjoy'd in the conscience, redounds to the comfort of the body. Now *David* can sleep sweetly, when he lies on a hard bed: what here he saith he would do, Psal. 3. 5. he saith he had done,

I laid me down and slept, I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. The Title of the Psalm tells us, when *David* had this sweet nights rest; not when he lay on his bed of down in his stately Palace at *Jerusalem*, but when he fled for his life from his unnatural Son *Absalom*, and possibly was forced to lie in the open field under the Canopy of Heaven. Truly it must be a soft pillow indeed, that could make him forget his danger; who then had such a disloyal Army at his back hunting of him. Yea, so transcendent is the sweet influence of this peace, that it can make the creature lie down as cheerfully to sleep in the Grave, as on the softest Bed; you will say that child is willing, that calls to be put to bed; some of the Saints have desired God to lay them at rest in their Beds of dust; and that not in a pet and discontent with their present trouble, as *Job* did; but from a sweet sense of this peace in their bosomes. Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, was the Swan-like song of old *Simeon*. He speaks like a Merchant, that had got all his goods on ship-board, and now desires the Master of the ship to hoise sail, and be gone homewards. Indeed what should a Christian, that is but a Foreigner here, desire to stay any longer for in the World, but to get this full lading in for Heaven? And when hath he that, if not when he is assured of his peace with God? This peace of the Gospel, and sense of the love of God in the soul, doth so admirably conduce to the enabling of a person in all difficulties and temptations, and troubles; that ordinarily before he calls his Saints to any hard service, or

hot work, he gives them a draught of this cordial Wine next their hearts to cheer them up, and imbolden them in the conflict. God calls *Abram* out of his native Countrey, *Gen. 12. 1.* And what so fit, as a promise of Christ to bring his heart to Gods foot, *vers. 2, 3.* A sad errand it was that sent *Jacob* to *Padan-Aram*; he fled from an angry wrathful brother that had murdered him already in his thoughts, to an unkind deceitful Uncle, under whom he should endure much hardship.

Now God comes in a sweet Gospel-vision to comfort this poor pilgrim; for by that ladder, whose foot stood on earth, and top reached heaven, Christ was lignified to his faith in whom Heaven and Earth meet, God and man are reconciled; and by the moving up and down of the Angels on the ladder, the Ministry of the Angels, which Christ by his death and intercession procures for his Saints, that they shall tend on them, as servants on their Masters children; so that the sum of all, is as much as if God had said, *Jacob*, thy brother *Esa*u hates thee, but in Christ I am reconciled to thee; thy Uncle *Laban*, he will wrong thee, and deal hardly by thee, but fear him not; As I am in Christ at peace with thee, so through him thou shalt have my especial care over thee, and the guardianship of the holy Angels about thee, to defend thee where-ever thou goest. The *Israelites*, when ready to take their march out of *Egypt* into a desolate Wilderness, where they should be put to many plunges, and their faith tried to purpose; to prepare them the more for these, he entertains them at a Gospel-supper before they go forth, I mean the Passover, which pointed to Christ; and no doubt the sweetness of this Feast made some gracious souls among them (that tasted Christ in it) endure the hardship and hunger of the Wilderness the more chearfully. And the same care and love did our Lord *Jesus* observe in the institution of his Supper, choosing that for the time of erecting this sweet Ordinance, when his Disciples feet stood at the brink of a Sea of sorrows and troubles, which his death, and the consequences of it, would inevitably bring upon them. Now the pardon of their sins seal'd to their souls in that Ordinance, must needs be welcom, and enable them to wade through their sufferings the more comfortably. Indeed the great care which Christ took for his Disciples, when he left the world, was not to leave them a quiet world to live in, but to arm them against a troublesome world; and to do this, he labours to satisfy their poor hearts with his love to them, and his Fathers love to them for his sake; he bequeaths unto them his peace, and empties it in the sweet consolations of it into their bosoms; for which end he tells them, as soon as he got to Heaven, he would pray his Father to send the Comforter to them with all speed, and sends them to *Jerusalem*, there to stay privately, and not go into the field, or openly contest with the angry world, till they received the strength and succour which the Spirit in his comforts should bring with him. By all which it doth abundantly appear, how powerful this Gospel-peace is to enable the soul for suffering. Now I proceed to shew how this peace doth prepare the heart for all sufferings. And that it doth these two ways.

First, As it brings along with it, and possesseth the soul (where it comes) with such glorious privileges, as lift it above all danger and damage from any sufferings whatever, from God, Man or Devils.

Secondly, As it is influential into the Saints graces and affections, exciting them, and making them act to such a height, as lifts the Christian above the fear of trouble and suffering.

SECT. II.

First, By possessing the believing soul of such glorious privileges as secure it from any real hurt that the worst of sufferings can do it. If a man could be assured, that he might walk as safely on the waves of the Sea, or in the flames of fire, as he doth in his Garden, he would be no more afraid of the one, than he is to do the other; or if a man had some coat of mail secretly about him, that would undoubtedly resist all blows, and quench all shot that are sent against him, it would be no such fearful thing for him to stand in the midst of Swords and Guns: Now the soul that is indeed at peace with God, is invested with such privileges as do set it above all hurt and damage from sufferings. The peace of God (is said) to garrison the believers heart and mind, *Phil. 4. 7.* He is surrounded with such blessed privileges, that he is as safe as one in an impregnable Castle. A person at peace with God, becomes then a Child of God. And when once the Christian comes to know his relation, and the dear love of his heavenly Father to him, afflictions, or sufferings from him, dread him not, because he knows it is inconsistent with the love of a father, either to hurt his Child, himself, or suffer him to be hurt by another, if he can help it. I have often wondred at *Isaac's* patience to submit to be bound for a sacrifice, and see the knife so near his throat, without any hideous out-crys or struglings that we read of; he was old enough to be apprehensive of death, and the horror of it, being conceiv'd by some to be above twenty years of age; that he was of good growth, is out of doubt by the wood which *Abraham* caused him to carry for the sacrifice; but such was the authority *Abraham* had over his son, and the confidence that *Isaac* had in his father, that he durst put his life into his hands, which, had the Knife been in any other hand, he would hardly have done; whoever may be the instrument of any trouble to a Saint, the Rod or Sword is at Gods disposure. Christ saw the Cup in his Fathers hand, and that made him take it willingly. Secondly, Every soul at peace with God, is heir to God. This follows his relation; *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joyne-heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17.* This is such a transcendent privilege, that the soul to whom the joyful news of it comes, is lifted up above the amazing and affrightning fears of any suffering. The Apostle having (in the fore-named place) but a little sweeten'd his thoughts with a few meditations on this soul-ravishing subject, see how his blessed soul is raised into a holy sleighting of all the troubles of this life; *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time,*

time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, *vers. 18.* He will not allow his own soul, or any that hath the hope of this inheritance, so far to undervalue the glory thereof, or the love of God that settled it on them, as to mention the greatness of their suffering in any way of pitying themselves for them. As if he had said, Hath God made us his heirs, and bestowed Heaven upon us in reversion? And shall we be so poor-spirited, to sit down and bemoan our selves for our present sorrows, that are no more to be compared with the glory that we are going to, than the little point of time (into which our short life with all our sufferings are contracted) is to be compared with the vast circumference of that eternity which we are to spend in endless bliss and happiness? He is a poor man we say, that one or two petty losses quite undoe. And he a poor Christian, that cries out he is undone by any Cross in this life; we may safely conclude such a one either is heir to nothing in the other world, or hath little or no evidence for what he hath there.

Secondly, This peace shooes and prepares the Christian for sufferings, as it is influential into his graces and affections; making them act to such a height, as lifts him above the fear of any suffering.

First, This peace where it is felt, makes the Christian unconquerable in his faith. Nothing is too hard for such a one to believe that carries a pardon in his conscience, and hath his peace with God sealed to him. *Moses* was to meet with many difficulties in that great work of conducting *Israel* out of *Egypt* towards *Canaan*; therefore to make them all a more easie conquest to his faith, when he should be assaulted with them, God gives him at his very first entring upon his charge an experiment of his mighty power in some miracles, as the turning his rod into a Serpent, and that again into a rod, making his hand leprous, and then restoring it again to be as sound as before, that he might never think any thing too hard for that God to do towards their salvation and deliverance, when things seem most desperate; and how unconquerable *Moses* was after these in his faith we see. Truly, when God speaks peace to a poor soul, he gives such a testimony of his Almighty power and love, that so long as the sweet sense of this lasts in the soul, the creatures faith cannot be posed; what doth God in his pardoning mercy, but turn the Serpent of the Law with all its threatnings, from which the sinner fled, as that which would sting him to death, into the blossoming Rod of the Gospel, that brings forth the sweet fruit of peace and life? And which is the greater miracle of the two think you, *Moses* his leprous hand made clean and sound, or a poor sinners heart leprous with sin, made clean and pure by washing in the blood of Christ, certainly this miracle of mercy, where it is strongly believed to be done, will make it easie for that Soul to trust God in a Sea of temporal sufferings, and chearfully follow him through a whole wilderness of troubles in this life. When *David* hath comfortable apprehensions of Gods pardoning mercy, then his faith is up, and can strongly act on God for temporal deliverance, *Pf. 32.* We find him under the sweet sense of his peace with God, able to vouch God as reconciled to him; *I said I will confess*

my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, *verse 5.* And now see to what a height his faith acts on God as to outward troubles, *verse 7.* Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. He spells this, which is the less, from the other that is incomparably the greater mercy.

Secondly, This peace with God, where it is felt, fills the heart with love to Christ. The Christians love to Christ takes fire at Christs love to him. And the hotter Christs love lies on the soul, the stronger reflection doth the creature make of love to him again. *She loved much, to whom much was forgiven, Luke 7. 47.* And the more love, the less fear there will be of suffering. We'll venture far for a dear friend; when Christ told his Disciples, *Lazarus was dead; Thomas would need go and dye with him for company, John 11. 16.* So powerful is love, even as strong as death; *For a good man* (said the Apostle) *some would even dare to dye;* that is, a merciful, kind man, whose love had endeared him to them. How much more daring will a gracious soul be to sacrifice his life for a good God? *Thy name* (saith the Spouse of Christ) *is as ointment poured forth, therefore the Virgins love thee, Cant. 1. 2.* Then Christs name is poured forth, when the love of God through him is shed abroad in the soul. Let this precious box be but broke, and the sweet savour of it diffused in the heart, and it will take away the unfavoury scent of the most stinking prison in the World. This heavenly fire of Christs love, beaming powerfully on the soul, will not only put out the Kitchen-fire of creature-love, but also the Hell-fire (as I may call it) of slavish fear: What makes us so agast at the thoughts of death, especially if it comes towards us in a bloody dress, and hath some circumstances of persecutors cruelty, to put a further grimness on its displeasing countenance? surely this comes from guilt and unacquaintance with Christ, and what he had done for us; who came partly on this very errand into the world, *To deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15.* And how hath he done it? but by reconciling us to God, and so reconciling us to the thoughts of death it self, as that which can only do us this kind office, to bring us and Christ (that hath done all this for us) together.

Thirdly, This peace enjoy'd in the Christians bosom hath a sweet influence into his self-denial. A grace so necessary to suffering, that Christ lays the Cross, as I may so say, upon the back of this grace. *Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me, Mark 8. 34.* Another (with *Simon of Cyrene*) may be compelled to carry Christs Cross after him a little way; but 'tis the self-denying soul that will stoop willingly, and down of his knees to have this burthen laid on him at Christs hand. Now the sense of a souls peace with God, will enable the creature in a twofold self-denial, and by both sweetly dispose him for any suffering from or for Christ.

First, It will enable him to deny himself in his sinful self. Sin may well be call'd our self, it cleaves so close to us, even as members to our body; as hard to

to mortifie a lust, as to cut off a joynt. And some sins are more our self than others, as our life is more bound up in some members than others; well, let them be what they will, there is a good day, in which, if Christ asks the head of the proudest lust among them all, he shall have it with less regret than *Herodias* obtain'd the *Baptists* at *Herods* hands. And what is that gaudy day, in which the Christian can so freely deny his sin, and deliver it up to justice, but when Christ is feasting him with this *hidden Manna* of pardon and peace? A true friend will rather deny himself than one he loves dearly, if it be in his power to grant his request; but least of all can he deny him, when his friend is doing him a greater kindness at the same time, that he asks a less. No such picklock to open the heart as love. When love comes a begging, and that at a time when it is shewing it self in some eminent expression of kindness to him at whose door she knocks, there is little fear but to speed. *Esther* chose that time to engage *Ahasuerus's* heart against *Haman* her enemy, when she exprest her love most to *Ahasuerus*, viz. at a Banquet. When doth God give, or indeed when can he give the like demonstration of his love to a poor soul, as when he entertains it at this Gospel-banquet? Now sure, if ever, God may prevail with his Child to send the cursed *Amalekite* to the Gallows, his lust to the Gibbet; do you think that *Mary Magdalen* when the blessed news dropt from Christ into her mournful heart, that her sins which were many, were all forgiven her, could now have been perswaded to have opened the door to any of her former lovers, and gone out of these embraces of Christs love, to have plaid the whore again? No, I doubt not but she would sooner have chose the flames of Martyrdom, than of lust. Indeed that which may make the creature deny a lust, can make the creature it shall not deny a Cross.

Secondly, The sense of this peace will enable the Christian to deny his carnal enjoyments. And these the Christian finds his great pull-backs from suffering. As the heart burns in the hot fit of love to the pleasures and profits of this World when he abounds with them; in that degree will his shaking fit of fear and grief be, when Christ calls him to part with them. What the sweet Wines and dainty fare of *Capua* was to *Hannibal's* Souldiers, that we shall find any intemperance of heart to the creature will be to us; it will enervate our spirits, and so effeminate us that we shall have little mind to endure hardship, when drawn into the field to look an enemy in the face. Now the sense of this Gospel-peace, will dead the heart to the creature, and facilitate the work of self-denial, as to the greatest enjoyments the world hath. God forbid (saith Paul) that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world, Gal. 6. 14. Pauls heart is dead to the World; now mark what gave the deaths wound to his carnal affections. By whom (saith he) the world is crucified to me, and I unto it; that is, Christ and his Cross. There was a time indeed that Paul loved the World as well as who most; but since he hath been acquainted with Christ, and the mercy of God in him to his soul pardoning his sins, and receiving him into favour and fellowship with himself;

now he is of another mind, he leaves the World, as *Saul* his seeking of the *Asses* at the news of a Kingdom; his haunt lies another way now. Let the *Ziboes* of the World take the world, and all they can make of it with their best husbandry. He'll not grutch them their happiness, for as much as his heavenly Lord and King is come in peace to his soul. None can part with the comfort of the creature so chearfully, as he who hath his mouth at the fountain-head, the love of God himself. Parents are near, and friends are dear, yet a loving Wife can forget her fathers house, and leave her old friends company to go with her Husband, though it be to a Prison; how much more will a gracious soul bid adieu to these, yea, life it self, to go to Christ, especially when he hath sent the Comforter into his bosom, to cheer him in the solitariness of the way with his sweet company.

A fourth suffering grace which the sweet sense this Gospel peace doth promote, is *Patience*; affliction and suffering to a patient soul are not grievous. Patience is, as one calls it, *τὸ τὴν λύπην*. The concocive faculty of the soul. That grace which digests all things, and turns them into good nourishment. Meats of hard digestion will not do well with squeamish weak stomachs, and therefore they are dainty and nice in their dyet; whereas men of strong stomachs, they refuse no meat that is set before them; all fare is a like to them. Truly thus there are some things are of very hard digestion to the spirits of men; the peevish, passionate, short-spirited Professor will never concoct reproaches, prison, and death it self, but rather quarrel with his profession, if such fare as these attend the Gospel. When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended, Mat. 13. 21. This will not stay in his stomach, but makes him cast up even that which else he could have kept, (a profession of Christ) might he have had it with a quiet life, and a whole skin. But now the patient soul, he makes his meal of what God in his Providence sets before him; if peace and prosperity be served up with the Gospel, he is thankful, and enjoys the sweetness of the mercy while it lasts; if God take these away, and instead of them will have him eat the Gospel-feast with sowre herbs of affliction and persecution, it shall not make him sick of his cheer. It is but eating the more largely of the comforts of the Gospel with them, and they go down very well wrapt up in them. Indeed the Christian is beholden to those consolations which flow from the peace of the Gospel for his patience. It were impossible for the people of God to endure what sometimes they meet with from Men and Devils also, as they do, had they not sweet help from the sense of Gods love in Christ, that lies glowing at their hearts in inward peace and joy. The Apostle resolves all the Saints patience, experience and hope, yea, glory in their tribulations, into this, as the cause of all; Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, Rom. 5. 5. Sin makes suffering intolerable; when that is gone, the worst part of the trouble is removed, a light cart goes through that sough easily, where the cart deeply loaden it set fast; guilt loads the soul, and bemires it in any suffering; take that away, and let

* Never a greater mistake

Mary Magdalen was a harlot. Luke 8-2 Mark 16-9

but not a prostitute

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let God speak peace to his soul, and he that rag'd before like a mad man under the cross, shall carry it without winching and whining. *The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds, Phil. 3.* Now what is patience but the keeping of the heart and mind compos'd and serene in all troubles that befall us? But a word or two for Application.

SECT. III.

Use 1. First, This informs our judgements in two particulars. First, what to judge of their patience in affliction, that have no interest in the Gospels peace. Secondly, what to think of their peace, who in affliction have no patience at all.

First, Some you shall see very still and quiet in affliction, yet meer strangers to this peace, ignorant of Christ the Peace-maker, walking in opposition to the terms God offers peace in the Gospel upon, and yet very calm in affliction. Certainly all is not right with this poor creature; if he had any sense how it is with him, he would have little patience to see himself under the hand of God, and not know but it may leave him in hell before it hath done with him. When I see one run over stones and hard way barefoot, and not complain, I do not admire his patience, but pity the poor creature that hath benumbed his feet, and as it were soled them with a brawny dead kind of flesh, so as to lose his feeling: But save your pity much more for those whose consciences are so benumb'd, and hearts petrified into a senseless stupidity, that they feel their misery no more than the stone doth the Masons saw which cuts it a sunder. Of all men out of hell, none more to be pitied, than he that hangs over the mouth of it, and yet is fearless of his danger; while thus the poor wretch is incapable of all means for his good. What good does Physick put into a dead mans mouth? if he cannot be chafed to some sense of his condition, all applications are in vain. And if afflictions (which are the strongest Physick) leave the creature senseless, there is little hope left that any other will work upon him.

Secondly, What shall we think of those that are great pretenders to this peace, yet cannot think with any patience of suffering from God or for God? certainly so far as the creature is acquainted with this peace, and hath the true sense of Gods love in Christ lying warm at his heart, he cannot but find proportionably his heart stand ready to submit to any suffering that God lays out for him. And therefore it behoves us well to try our peace and comfort. If thou hast no heart to suffer for God, but choolest a sin to escape a cross, thy peace is false; if thou hast but little patience under ordinary afflictions, to compose thy spirit from murmuring, and sustain thy heart from sinking, thy faith on the promise is weak. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small, Prov. 24. 10.*

Use 2. Let this stir thee up, Christian, to be very tender and chary of thy peace with God and thy own conscience. Keep this peace clear and unbroken, and it will keep thy heart whole, when the whole world breaks about thee. So long as this peace

of God rules in your hearts, you are safe from fear or danger, though in a prison, at a stake. But if thou sufferest that to be wounded, then thy enemies will come upon thee as *Simcon* and *Levi* on the men of *Sechem* when fore, and be too hard for thee. O 'tis sad, (friends) you will find it so, to go with fore and smarting consciences into a suffering condition. A thorn in the foot will make any way uneasy to the traveller, and guilt in the conscience any condition uncomfortable to the Christian, but most of all a suffering one. Now, if you will keep your peace unbroken, you must bestow some attendance on it, and set as it were a life-guard about it. The choicest flowers need most looking to. The richer the treasure, the safer we lay it. This peace is thy treasure, look well where thou layest it. Two ways our Saviour tells us that worldly treasure, such as silver and gold is, may be lost; by *thieves that break in and carry it away, and by rust that eats and corrupts it, Mat. 6. 19.* There are two ways something like these, wherein the Christian may go by the loss in this his heavenly treasure of inward peace and comfort; presumptuous sins, these are the thieves that break through and steal the Saints comfort away; when the Christian comes to look into his soul after such a bold act, and thinks to entertain himself (as formerly) with the comforts of his pardoned state, interest in Christ, and hopes of Heaven through him, alas he finds a sad change; no promise that will give out its consolations to him. The Cellar door is lockt, Christ with-drawn, and the keys carried away with him. He may even cry out with a sad complaint, as *Mary* when she found not Christs body in the Sepulchre, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* Thus the Christian may with aking heart bemoan his folly; my pride, my uncleanness, my earthly mindedness, they have taken away my treasure, rob'd me of my comfort, I could never have comfortable sight of Gods face in any duty or promise since I fell into that foul sin. And therefore Christian, have a care of such robbers of thy peace as this. *The spirit of man is called the candle of the Lord, Prov. 20. 27.* Hath God lighted thy candle (Christian) cheared thy spirit (I mean) with the sense of his love? Take heed of presumptuous sins; if such a thief be suffered in this thy candle, thy comfort will soon swaile out. Hast thou fallen into the hands of any such presumptuous sins, that have stollen thy peace from thee? send speedily thy hue and cry after them; I mean, make thy sad moan to God, renew thy repentance out of hand, and raise Heaven upon them by a spirit of prayer. This is no time to delay; the further thou lettest these sins go without repentance, the harder thou wilt find it to recover thy lost peace and joy out of their hand; and for thy encouragement know, God is ready upon thy serious and solemn return, to restore thee to the joy of his salvation, and do Justice upon these enemies of thy soul for thee by his mortifying grace, if thou wilt prosecute the Law upon them closely and vigorously, without relenting towards them, or being bribed with the pleasure, or carnal advantage, that they will not spare to offer, so their lives may be saved.

Again, As presumptuous sins are the thieves, that

that with a high hand to rob the Christian of his comfort; so sloth and negligence are as the rust, that in time will fret into his comfort, and eat out the heart and strength of it. It is impossible that the Christian who is careless and secure in his walking, infrequent or negligent in his communion with God, should long be owner of much peace or comfort that is true; what if thou dost not pour water of presumptuous sins into the Lamp of thy joy to quench it? 'tis enough, if thou dost not pour oyl of duty to feed and maintain it. Thou art a murderer to thy comfort by starving it, as well as by stabbing of it.

VERSE 16.

Above all, taking the Shield of Faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.

THE fourth piece in the Christian Panoply, presents it self in this Verse to our consideration. And that is, *the Shield of Faith*. A grace of graces it is, and here fitly placed in the midst of the other her companions. It stands (methinks) among them as the heart in the midst of the body; or if you please, as David when Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren, 1 Sam. 16. 13. The Apostle, when he comes to speak of this grace, he doth as it were, lift up its head, and anoint it above all its fellows. *Above all take the Shield of Faith*, and the words easily fall into these two general parts.

First, An exhortation, *Above all, take the Shield of Faith*.

Secondly, A powerful Argument pressing the Exhortation, *Whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked*.

CHAP. I.

The Explication of the words in a fourfold Inquiry.

IN the Exhortation, these four particulars call for our enquiry towards the Explication of the words. First, What Faith it is, that is here commended to the Christian souldier. Secondly, Having found the kind, we are to enquire what this faith is as to its nature. Thirdly, Why it is compared to a Shield, rather than other pieces. Fourthly, What is the importance of this *en nān*, *above all*.

SECT. I.

Quest. 1. First, What faith it is that here is commanded; This will soon be known, if we consider the cause and end for which it is commended to the Christian; and that is to enable him to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; i. e. of the wicked one the Devil. Now look upon the several kinds of faith; and that among them must be the faith of this place, which enables the creature to quench Satans fiery darts; yea, all his fiery darts. *Historical faith* cannot do this, and therefore is not it: This is so far from quenching Satans fiery darts, that the Devil himself, that shoots them, hath this faith, James 2. 19. *The Devils believed, Temporary faith* cannot do it; this is so far from quenching Satans fiery darts, that it self is quenched by them. It makes a goodly blaze of profession, and endures for a while, Matth. 13. 21. but soon disappears; *Miraculous faith*, this falls as short as the former. *Judas's* miraculous faith, which he had with other the Apostles (for ought that we can read) enabling him to cast Devils out of others, left himself possessed

of the Devil of covetousness, hypocrisie and treason, yea, a whole legion of lusts that hurried him down the hill of despair, into the bottomless pit of perdition. There is only one kind of faith remains, which is it the Apostle means in this place, and that is *justifying faith*. This indeed is a grace that makes him, whoever hath it, the Devils match. Satan hath not so much advantage of the Christian by the transcendency of his natural abilities, as he hath of Satan in this cause and this his weapon. The Apostle is confident to give the day to the Christian, before the fight is fully over; *Ye have overcome the wicked one*, 1 John 2. 13. that is, you are as sure to do it, as if you were now mounted your triumphant chariot in heaven. The Knight shall overcome the Giant, the Saint, Satan; and the same Apostle tells us what gets him the day, 1 John 5. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*.

SECT. II.

Quest. The second enquiry is, what this justifying faith is?

Ans. I shall answer to this; First, negatively; Secondly, affirmatively.

First, Negatively, in two particulars.

First, Justifying faith is not a naked assent to the truths of the Gospel. This, justifying faith doth give; but this doth not make it justifying faith. A dogmatical faith or historical, is comprehended in justifying faith: But Dogmatical faith doth not infer Justifying faith. Justifying faith cannot be without

a dogmatical; it implies it, as the rational soul in man, doth the sensitive. But, the dogmatical may be without the justifying, as the sensitive soul in the beast is without the rational. *Judas* knew the Scriptures, and without doubt did assent to the truth of them, when he was so zealous a preacher of the Gospel: But he never had so much as one drachm of justifying faith in his soul, John 6. 64. *There are some of you which believe not, for Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him; yea, Judas's Master, the Devil himself, one far enough (I suppose) from justifying faith, yet he assents to the truth of the Word. He goes against his conscience, when he denies them: when he tempted Christ, he did not dispute against the Scripture, but from the Scripture, drawing his arrows out of this quiver, Matth. 4. 6. And at another time, he makes as full a confession of Christ (for the matter) as Peter himself did, Matth. 8. 22. compared with Matth. 16. 17. Assent to the truth of the Word, is but an act of the understanding, which reprobates and Devils may exercise. But justifying faith is a compounded habit, and hath its seat, both in the understanding and will: And therefore called a believing with the heart, Rom. 10. 10. yea, a believing with all the heart, Acts 8. 37. Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. It takes in all the powers of the soul. There is a double object in the promise; one proper to the understanding, to move that; another proper to the will, to excite and work upon that. As the promise is true, so it calls for an act of assent from the understanding; and as it is good as well as true, so it calls for an act of the will to embrace and receive it: Therefore he which only notionally knows the promise, and speculatively assents to the truth of it, without clinging to it, and embracing of it, he doth not believe savingly, and can have no more benefit from the promise, than the nourishment from the food he sees and acknowledgeth to be wholsom, but eats none of it.*

Secondly, Faith is not assurance. If it were, Saint John might have spared his pains, who wrote to them that believed on the Name of the Son of God, that they might know that they had eternal life, 1 John 5. 13. They might then have said, we do this already; what else is your faith, but a believing that we are such as through Christ are pardoned, and shall through him be saved? But this cannot be so: If faith were assurance; then a mans sins would be pardoned before he believes, for he must necessarily be pardoned, before he can know he is pardoned. The candle must be lighted, before I can see it is lighted. The child must be born, before I can be assured it is born. The object must be before the

assurance

the root

act. Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith itself. It is in faith as the flower is in the root; faith in time, after much communion with God, acquaintance with the Word, and experience of his dealings with the soul, may flourish into assurance: But, as the root truly lives before the flower appears, and continues when that hath shed its beautiful leaves, and is gone again: so doth true justifying faith live, before assurance comes, and after it dis-

appears. Assurance is as it were the cream of faith; now you know, there is milk, before there is cream; (this riseth not but after some time standing) and there remains milk after it is sketed off. How many (alas) of the precious Saints of God must we shut out from being believers; if no faith, but what amounts to assurance? We must needs offend against the generation of Gods children, among whom, some are babes, not yet come to the use of their reflect act of faith, so as to own the grace of God in them to be true, upon the review that they take of their own actings: And must not the child be allowed to be a child, till he can speak for himself, and say he is so? Others there are in Christs family, who are of higher stature, and greater experience in the wayes of God, yet have lost those apprehensions of pardoning mercy, which once they were (through the goodness of God) able to have shewn; shall we say their faith went away in the departure of their assurance? how oft then in a year may a believer be no believer? even as often as God withdraws and leaves the creature in the dark. Assurance is like the Sun-flower, which opens with the day, and shuts with the night. It follows the motion of Gods face; if that looks smilingly on the soul, it lives; if that frowns or hides it self, it dyes. But faith is a plant that can grow in the shade, a grace that can find the way to heaven in a dark night. It can walk in darkness, and yet trust in the Name of the Lord, Isa. 50. 10. In a word, by making the essence of faith to lye in assurance, we should not only offend against the generation of Gods children, but against the God and Father of these children; for at one clap we turn the greater number of those children he hath here on earth out of doors, yea, we are cruel to those that he is most tender of, and make sad the hearts of those that he would have chiefly comforted. Indeed if this were true, a great part of Gospel-provision laid up in the promises, is of little use; we read of promises to those that mourn, *they shall be comforted*; to the contrite, *they shall be revived*; to him that walks in darkness, *Isa. 50. and the like*; these belong to Believers, and none else; surely then there are some Believers that are in the dark, under the hatches of sorrow, wounded and broken with their sins, and temptation for them; but they are not such as are assured of the love of God, their water is turned into joy, their night into light, their sighs and sobs into joy and praise.

Secondly, I shall answer Affirmatively, what justifying faith is; and in the description of it, I shall consider it solely as justifying. And so take it in these few words, It is that act of the soul, whereby it rests on Christ crucified for pardon and life, and that upon the warrant of the promise. In the description observe,

First, The subject where faith is seated, nor any single faculty, but the soul; Of this I have spoke something before.

Secondly, Here is the object of faith as justifying, and that is Christ crucified. The whole truth of God is the object of justifying faith, it trades with the whole Word of God, and doth firmly assent unto it, but

x Justifying faith

but in its justifying act, it singles out Christ crucified for its object. First, The person of Christ is the object of faith as justifying. Secondly, Christ as crucified.

First, The person of Christ, not any axiome or proposition in the Word; This is the object of assurance, not of faith. Assurance saith, I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ; Faiths language is, I believe on Christ for the pardon of them. The Word of God doth direct our faith to Christ, and terminates it upon him; called therefore, *a coming to Christ*, *Mat. 11. 28. a receiving of him*, *Joh. 1. 12. a believing on him*, *Joh. 17. 20.* The promise is but the dish, in which Christ the true food of the soul is served up; and if faiths hand be on the promise, it is but as one that draws the dish to him, that he may come at the dainties in it. The promise is the marriage-ring on the hand of faith; now we are not married to the ring, but with it unto Christ. *All promises*, saith the Apostle, *are Yea and Amen in him*. They have their excellency from him, and efficacy in him. I mean in a souls union to him. To run away with a promise, and not to close with Christ, and by faith become one in him, is, as if a man should rend a branch from a Tree, and lay it up in his Chest, expecting it to bear fruit there. Promises are dead branches severed from Christ. But when a soul by faith becomes united to Christ, then he partakes of all his fatness; not a promise but yields sweetness to it.

Secondly, As Christ is the primary object of faith, so Christ as crucified. Not Christ in his personal excellencies; so he is the object rather of our love than faith; but as bleeding, and that to death under the hand of Divine Justice for to make an atonement by Gods own appointment for the sins of the world. As the Hand-maids eye is to her Mistresses hand for direction, so faiths eye is on Gods revealing himself in his Word, which way God by it points the soul, whither it goes. Now there faiths finds God intending to save poor sinners pitch on Christ, and Christ alone for the transacting and effecting of it, and him alone God chooseth to trust with the work, him and him alone will faith choose to lay the burden of her conscience on.

Again, Faith observes how Christ performed this great work, and accordingly how the promise holds forth to be applied for pardon and salvation. Now faith finds, that then Christ made the full payment to the Justice of God for sin, when he poured out his blood to death upon the Cross; all the precious acts of his Humiliation, were but preparatory to this. He was born to dye, he was sent into the World as a Lamb bound with the bonds of an irreversible Decree for a sacrifice. Christ himself when he came into the World, understood this to be the errand he was sent on, *Heb. 10. 5. When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast prepared me*, i. e. to be an expiatory Sacrifice; without this, all he had done, would have been labour undone. No redemption, but by his blood, *Ephes. 1. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins.* No Church without his blood,

Acts 20. 28. The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood, Elsewhere Christi meritis: exitus Ecclesia. The Church is taken out of dying Jesus his side, as Eve out of sleeping Adams. Christ did not redeem and save poor souls, by sitting in Majesty on his Heavenly Throne, but by hanging on the shameful Cross, under the tormenting hand of mans fury, and Gods just wrath. And therefore the poor soul, that would have pardon of sin, is directed to place his faith not only on Christ, but on bleeding Christ, *Rom. 3. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

3. The act of faith upon this object, and that is resting on Christ crucified for pardon and life. I know there are many acts of the soul antecedent to this, without which the creature can never truly exercise this. As knowledge, especially of God and Christ, upon whose authority and testimony it relies, *I know whom I have believed*, *2 Tim. 1. 12.* None will readily trust a stranger, that he is wholly unacquainted with. Abraham went indeed he knew not whither, but he did not go with he known or who. The great thing that God laboured to instruct Abraham in, and satisfy him with, was the knowledge of his own glorious self, who he was, that he might take his word, and rely on it, how harsh and improbable, yea, impossible soever it might sound in sense or reasons ear, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Secondly, Assent to the truth of the Word of God; if this foundation stone be not laid, faiths building cannot go on. Who will trust him, that he dares not think speaks true? Thirdly, A sense of our own vileness and emptiness. By the one to see our demerit, what we deserve, Hell and damnation; By the other our own impotency, how little we can contribute, yea, just nothing to our own reconciliation; I joyn them together, because the one ariseth out of the other; sense of this emptiness comes from the deep apprehensions a soul hath of the others fulness in him; you never knew a man full of self-confidence, and self-abasement together. The conscience cannot abound with the sense of sin, and the heart with self-conceit at the same time. When the Commandment came, sin revived, and I dyed, *Rom. 7. 9.* That is, when the Commandment came in the accusations of it to his conscience; sin, that like a sleepy Lyon had lien still, and he secure and confident by it, when that began to roar in his conscience, then he dyed, that is, his vain-confidence of himself gave up the ghost. Both these are necessary to faith; sense of sin, like the smart of a wound, to make the creature think of a plaster to cure it; and sense of emptiness and insufficiency in himself or any creature to do the cure, necessary to make him go out to Christ for cure. We do not go abroad to beg what we have of our own within doors. These (with some other) are necessary to faith; but the receiving of Christ, and resting on Christ, is that act of faith to which justification is promised, *Joh. 3. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* Now every one that assents to the truth of what the Scrip-
ture

ture faith of Christ, doth not believe on Christ. No, this believing on Christ implies an union of the soul to Christ, and induciary recumbency on Christ. Therefore we are bid to take hold of Christ, *Isa. 27. 5.* (who is there called Gods strength, as elsewhere his arm) *that we may make peace with God, and we shall make peace with him;* It is not the sight of a mans arm stretched out to a man in the water will save him from drowning, but the taking hold of it. Christ is a stone, faith builds upon Christ for salvation; and how, but by laying its whole weight and expectation of mercy on him? what *Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 12.* calls believing in the former part of the verse, he calls in the latter part a committing to him to be kept as a trust that day.

The fourth and last branch in the description, is the warrant and security that faith goes upon in this act. And this it takes from the promise; indeed there is no way, how God can be conceived to contract a debt to his creature, but by promise. There are ways for men to become debtors one to another, though never any promise past from them. The father is a debtor to his child, and owes him love, provision and nurture. The child a debtor to his parent, and owes him honour and obedience, though neither of them promised this to each other. Much more doth the creature stand deep in Gods debt-book, and owes himself with all he hath to God his Maker, though he hath not the grace voluntarily to make these over to God by promise and Covenant. But the great God is so absolute a Sovereign, that none can make a Law to bind him but himself; till he be pleased to pass an act of grace, of his own good-will, to give this, or do that good thing, to and for his poor creatures, no claim can be laid to the least mercy at his hands. There are two things therefore that are greatly to be heeded by the soul that would believe.

First, He must enquire for a promise to bear his faith out, and warrant him to expect such a mercy at Gods hand. And then secondly, when he hath found a promise, and observed the terms well on which it runs, not to stay for any further encouragement, but upon the credit of the naked promise to set his faith on work.

First, To enquire out a promise, and observe well the terms on which it runs; indeed upon the point it comes all to one, to believe without a promise, or to believe on a promise, but not observe the terms of it. Both are presumptuous, and speed alike. A Prince hath as much reason to be angry with him, that doth not keep close to his commission, as with another that acts without any commission. O how little considered is this by many? who make bold of Gods arm to lean on for pardon and salvation, but never think, that the promise which presents Christ to be leaned on as a Saviour, presents him at the same time to be chosen as a Lord and Prince; such were the rebellious *Israelites*, who durst make God and his promise a leaning stock for their foal elbows to rest on; *They call themselves of the Holy City, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. 48. 2.* But they were more bold than welcome. God rejected their confidence, and loathed their sauciness. Though a Prince would not disdain to let a poor wounded

man (faint with bleeding, and unable to go alone) upon his humble request, make use of his arm, rather than he should perish in the streets; yet he would with indignation reject the same motion from a filthy Drunkard that is besmeared with his vomit; if he should desire leave to lean on him, because he cannot go alone. I am sure, how welcom soever the poor humble soul (that lies bleeding for his sins at the very mouth of Hell in his own thoughts) is to God, when he comes upon the encouragement of the promise to lean on Christ; yet the profane wretch that emboldens himself to come to Christ, shall be kickt away with infinite disdain and abhorrency by a holy God, for abusing his promise.

Secondly, When a poor sinner hath found a promise, and observes the terms with a heart willing to embrace them, now he is to put forth an act of faith upon the credit of the naked promise, without staying for any other encouragement elsewhere. Faith is a right pilgrim-grace; it travels with us to Heaven, and when it fees us safe got within our Fathers doors, (Heaven I mean) it takes leave of us. Now the promise is this pilgrims staff, with which it sets forth, though (like *Jacob* on his way to *Padan-Aram*) it hath nothing else with it. Remember thy word unto thy servant (saith *David*) upon which thou hast caused me to hope, *Psal. 118. 49.* The Word of promise was all he had to shew; and he counts that enough to set his faith on work. But alas, some make comfort the ground of faith, and experience their warrant to believe. They will believe when God manifests himself to them, and sends in some sensible demonstration of his love to their souls; but till this be done, the promise hath little authority to silence their unbelieving cavils, and quiet their misgiving hearts into a waiting on God for the performance of what there is spoke from Gods own mouth. Like *old Jacob*, who gave no credit to his children, when they told him *Joseph* was yet alive, and Governour over the land of *Egypt*. This news was too good and great to enter into his belief, who had given him for dead so long; It is said, *His heart fainted, for he believed them not, Gen. 25. 6.* But when he saw the Waggon that *Joseph* had sent to carry him thither, then he said, *The spirit of Jacob revived, ver. 27.* Truly then, though the promise tells the poor humbled soul, Christ is alive, Governour of Heaven it self, with all power there and on Earth put into his hand, that he may give eternal life unto all that believe on him, and he be therefore exhorted to rest upon Christ in the promise, yet his heart faints and believes not. 'tis the Waggon he would fain see, some sensible expressions of Gods love that he listens after; if he did but know that he was an Elect person, or were one that God did love, then he would believe. But God hath little reason to thank him in the mean time for suspending his faith till these come. This is all I may say, to believe, for spiritual leaves, and in no other sense than faith.

SECT. III.

Quest. 3. Why is faith compared to a shield?

Ans. For a double resemblance, that is be-

tween this grace, and that piece of Armour.

First, The shield is not for the defence of any particular part of the body, as almost all the other pieces are, Helmet fitted for the head, Plate designed for the breast, and so others, they have their several parts, which they are fastened to. But the Shield is a piece, that is intended for the defence of the whole body. It was used therefore to be made very large, for its broadness called *Scutum* of *Sigax*, a gate or door, because so long and large, as in a manner to cover the whole body. To which that place alludes, Psal. 5. 12. *Thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favour thou wilt compass him as with a shield.* And if the shield were not large enough at once to cover every part, yet being a moveable piece of Armour, the skilful Souldier might turn it this way or that way, to catch the blow, or Arrow from lighting on any part they were directed to. And this indeed doth excellently well set forth the universal use that faith is of to the Christian. It defends the whole man; every part of the Christian by it is preserv'd. Sometimes the temptation is level'd at his head; Satan he will be disputing against this truth and that, to make the Christian, if he can, call them into question, meerly because his reason and understanding cannot comprehend them; and he prevails with some that do not think themselves the unwisest in the world, upon this very account, to blot the Deity of Christ, with other mysterious truths of the Gospel, quite out of their Creed. Now faith interposeth between the Christian and this arrow. It comes into the relief of the Christians weak understanding as seasonably, as *Zerubbabab* did to *David*, when the Giant *Ishbi-benob*, thought to have slain him. I'll trust the Word of God, saith the Believer, rather than my own purblind reason. *Abraham* not being weak in faith; consider'd not his own body now dead, Rom. 4. 19. If faith should have had the hearing of that business; yea, if that holy man had put it to a reference between sense and reason also, what resolution his thoughts should come to concerning this strange message that was brought him, he would have been in danger of calling the truth of it in question, though God himself was the messenger: But faith brought him honourably off.

Again, Is it the Conscience that the Tempter assaults? (And it is not seldom that he is shooting his fiery darts of doubt and terror at this mark) faith receives the shock, and saves the creature harmless. *I had faith'd unless I had believed* (saith *David*) Psal. 27. 13. He means when false witnesses rose up against him, and such as breathed out cruelty, as appears verse 12. faith was his best fence against mans charge, and so it is against Satans and evil suggestions also. Never was man in a sadder condition, than the poor Jaylor, Acts 16. much ado he had to keep his own hands from offering violence to himself, who that had seen him fall trembling at *Paul* and *Silas* feet, with that sad question in his mouth, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* ver. 30. could have thought this deep wound that was now given his Conscience, would so soon have been closed and cured? as we find it, ver. 34.

The earth-quake of horreur that did so dreadfully shake his Conscience, is gone, and his trembling turn'd into rejoycing; now mark what made this blessed calm, *Believe* (saith *Paul*) *on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved*, ver. 31. And ver. 34. it is said, *he rejoiced, believing in God with his whole house.* It is faith stills the storm which sin hath raised; faith that chang'd his doleful note into joy and gladness. Happy man he was, that had such skilful Chirurgione so near him, who could direct him the nearest way to a cure.

Again, Is it the Will that the temptation is laid to catch? some commands of God cannot be obeyed without much self-denial, because they cross us in that, which our own wills are carried forth very strongly to desire; so that we must deny our will, before we can do the will of God. Now a temptation comes very forcible, when it runs with the Tyde of our own wills. What, saith Satan, wilt thou serve a God that thus thwarts thee in every thing? If thou lovest any thing more than other, presently he must have that from thee; no lamb in all the flock will serve for a Sacrifice, but *Isaac*, *Abraham's* only child, he must be offered up. No place will content God, that *Abraham* should serve him in, but where he must live in banishment from his dear relations and acquaintance; Wilt thou, saith Satan, yield to such hard terms as these? Now faith is the grace that doth the soul admirable service at such a pinch as this: It is able to appease the tumult, which such a temptation may raise in the soul, and dismiss the rout of all mutinous thoughts, yea, to keep the King of Heavens peace so sweetly in the Christians bosome, that such a temptation, if it comes, shall find few or none to declare for it. Heb. 11. 8. *By faith* (it is said) *Abraham obeyed, and went out not knowing whither.* And we do not read of one fond look that his heart cast back upon his dear native Country, as he went from it, so well-pleased had faith made him with his journey. It was hard work for *Moses* to strip himself of his Magistrates robes, and put his hands on his servants head; hard to leave another to enter upon his labours, and reap the honour of lodging the *Israelites* colours in *Canaan*, after it had cost him so many a weary step to bring them within sight of it; yet faith made them willing. He saw better robes that he should put on in heaven, than those he was called to put off on earth. The lowest place in glory is beyond all compare, greater preferment, than the highest place of honour here below; to stand before the Throne there, and minister to God in immediate service, than to sit in a Throne on earth and have all the world waiting at his foot.

Secondly, The Shield doth not only defend the whole body, but is a defence to the Souldiers Armour also. It keeps the arrow from the helmet as well as head, from the breast and breast-plate also. Thus faith it is Armour upon Armour, a grace that preserves all the other graces. But of this more hereafter.

S E C T. IV.

Quest. 4. What doth this ἐν πάσι (above all) import?

Ans. There is variety among Interpreters about it. *Jerome* reads it, *in omnibus, sumentes scutum fidei*: In all things, taking the shield of faith, i. e. In all duties, enterprizes, temptations or afflictions; whatever you are called to do or suffer, take faith; Indeed faith to the Christian, is like fire to the Chymist; nothing can be done without it Christianly. *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. And how can the Christian please himself in that wherein he doth not please his God? others read it, *over all take the shield of faith*, i. e. Take it over all your graces, as that which will cover them. All other graces have their safety from faith, they lie secure under the shadow of faith, as an Army lies safe under the protection and command of a strong Castle planted round with Cannon. But we shall follow our translation as being most comprehensive, and that which will take these within its compass, *Above all take, &c.* that is, among all the pieces of Armour which you are to provide, and wear for your defence, let this have the preheminance of your care to get, and having got, to keep it. Now that the Apostle meant to give a preheminance to faith above other graces, appears; *First*, By the piece of Armour he compares it to; *the Shield*, which of old was prized above all other pieces by soldiers. They counted it greater shame to lose their shield, than to lose the field, and therefore when under the very foot of their enemy, they would not part with it, but esteemed it an honour to dye with their shield in their hand. It was the charge that one laid upon her son, going into the

wars, when she gave him a shield, *That he should either bring his shield home with him, or he be brought home upon his shield*; she had rather see him dead with it, than come home without it. *Secondly*, By the noble effect which is here ascribed to faith; *By which ye shall quench the fiery darts of the wicked*. The other pieces are nakedly commended. Take the Girdle of Truth, Breast-plate of Righteousness, and so the rest, but nothing singly ascribed to any of them, what they can do; but when he speaks of Faith, he ascribes the whole victory to it. This quencheth all the fiery darts of the wicked. And why thus? are the other graces of no use, and doth faith do all? what need then the Christian load himself with more than this one piece? I answer, every piece hath its necessary use in the Christians warfare; not any part of the whole suit can be spared in the day of battle; but the reason (I humbly conceive) why no particular effect is annex'd severally to each of these, but all ascribed to faith, is to let us know, that all these graces, their efficacy, and our benefit from them, is in their conjunction with faith, and influence they receive from faith; so that this is plainly the design of the Spirit of God to give faith the precedency in our care above the rest; only take heed that you do not fancy any indifferency or negligence to be allowed you in your endeavours after the other graces, because you are more strongly provoked and excited up to the getting and keeping this. The Apostle would intend your care here, but not remit it there; cannot we bid a souldier above all parts of his body to beware of a wound at his heart, but he must needs think presently he needs take no care to guard his head truly such a one would deserve a cracked crown to cure him of his folly. The word thus opened, we shall content our selves with one general observation from them, and 'tis this.

C H A P. II.

Sheweth the preheminance of Faith above other Graces in four particulars.

First. That faith of all graces is the chief, and chiefly to be laboured for. There is a precedency or preheminance peculiar to this, above all other. It is among graces, as the Sun is among the Planets; or as *Solomon* *versus* *among the daughters*, Prov. 31. 20. *Though every good hath done virtuously, yet thou O faith excellest them all*. The Apostle indeed gives the precedency to love, and lets faith on the lower hand, 1 Cor. 13. *Now abide faith, hope, charity, the first three, but the greatest is charity*; yet you may observe, that this prelation of it before faith, hath a particular respect to the Saints blissful state in heaven; where love remains, and faith ceaseth; in which regard love indeed is the greater, because it is the end of our faith; we apprehend by faith, that we may enjoy by love: but if we consider the Christians present state, while militant on earth, in this respect love must give place to faith; 'tis true, love is the

grace that shall triumph in heaven; but it is faith, not love, which is the conquering grace here on earth. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, 1 Joh. 5. 4. Love indeed hath its place in the battle, and doth excellent service, but it is under Faith its leader, Gal. 5. 6. *Faith which worketh by love*, even as the Captain fighteth by his souldiers, whom he leads on; so faith works by love which it excites. Love ('tis true) is the grace that at last possesseth the inheritance, but it is faith that gives the Christian right unto it, without which he should never have enjoyed it. 1 Joh. 1. 3. *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name*. In a word, it is love that unites God and glorified Saints together in heaven; but it was faith that first united them to Christ while they were on earth, Eph. 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*. And if Christ had not dwelt in them by faith on earth,

earth, they should never have dwelt with God in Heaven. But I proceed to shew wherein it appears, that faith hath such a relation above other graces, which take in these following particulars.

SECT. I.

First, In the great enquiry that God makes after faith above all other graces. Nothing more speaks our esteem of persons or things, than our enquiry after them. We ask first and most for those that stand highest in our thought. *Is your father well (said Joseph) the old man of whom ye speak, is he alive?* Gen. 43. 27. No doubt there were others whose welfare Joseph would have been glad to hear of also, but being most bent and pained with a natural affection to his father, he caeth himself of this first. And when David ask't for *Absalom* above all others; *Is the young man Absalom safe?* and over again with it to *Cush*, 2 Sam. 18. it was easie to guess how highly he valued his life. Now you shall find the great enquiry that God makes is for faith. *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the Earth?* Luke 18. 8. Implying, that this is the grace which he will especially look for, and desires to find. We read, John 9. of a great miracle, a man by Christ restored to his sight, that was born blind. This so enraged the malicious *Pharisees*, that they excommunicate the poor man for no other fault, but giving his merciful Physician a good word. This brings Christ the sooner to him, so tender is he of those that suffer for him, that they shall not long want his sweet company; and he hath no cause to complain for being cast out of mans society, that gains Christs presence by the same. Now observe what Christ saith to him at his first meeting, v. 35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God?* The man had already exprest some zeal for Christ, in vindicating him, and speaking well of him to the head of the bitterest enemies he had on earth, for which he was now a sufferer at their hands. This was very commendable, but there is one thing that Christ prizeth above all this, and that is faith. This he enquires after, *dost thou believe on the Son of God?* As if he had said, all this thy zeal in speaking for me, and patience in suffering are nothing worth in my account, except thou hast faith also. Indeed most of Gods dealings with his people, what are they, but enquiries after faith, either the truth or strength of it? when he afflicts them, it is for the tryal of their faith, 1 Pet. 1. 7. Afflictions they are Gods Spade and Mattock, by which he digs into his peoples hearts to find out this gold of faith; not but that he enquires for other graces also, but this is named for all, as the chief, which found, all the other will soon appear. When God seems to delay and makes (as it were) a halt in his providence, before he comes with the mercy he promiseth, and we pray for; 'tis exploratory to faith. *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Mat. 15. 28. She had received her answer without so much ado; only Christ had a mercy in store for her more than she thought of; with the granting of her suit in the cure of her daughter, he

had a mind to give her the evidence of her faith also, and the high esteem God hath of this grace, as that which may have of him what it will.

SECT. II.

2. The commendations that are given to faith above other graces. You shall observe that in the same action, wherein other graces are eminently exercised as well as faith, even then faith is taken notice of, and the crown set upon faiths head, rather than any of the other. We hear nothing almost of any other grace throughout the whole eleventh of the Hebrews, but faith; *by faith Abraham, by faith Jacob*, and the rest of those worthies did all those famous exploits. There was a concurrence of the other graces with faith in them all. But all goes under the name of faith. The whole Army fight, yet the General or Captain hath the honour of the victory ascribed to him. *Alexanders* and *Casars* names are transmitted to posterity as the great conquerors, that overcame so many battels, not the private souldiers that fought under them. Faith is the Captain-grace; all those famous acts of those Saints are recorded as the achievements of faith. Thus concerning the Centurion Mat. 8. 10. *Verily (saith Christ) I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* There were other graces very eminent in the Centurion besides his faith; his conscientious care of his poor servant, for whom he could have done no more, if he had been his own child; there are some that call themselves Christians, yet would not have troubled themselves so much for a sick servant; such alas are oft less regarded in sickness, than their Masters beast. But especially his humility, this shined forth very eminently, in that self-abasing expression, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof*, verse 8. Consider but his calling and degree therein, and it makes his humility more conspicuous. A Sword-man, yea, a Commander; such use to speak big and high. Power is seldom a friend to humility, surely he was a man of rare humble spirit, that he, whose mouth was used so much to words of command over his souldiers, could so dimit and humble himself in his address to Christ; yet his faith out-shines his humility in its greatest strength. Not, I have not found such humility, but such faith in all Israel. As if Christ had said, there is not one believer in all Israel, but I know him, and how rich he is in faith also; but I have not found so much of this heavenly treasure in any ones hand, as in the Centurions. Indeed the Christians chief riches is in faiths hand. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?* Jam. 2. 5. Why rich in faith, rather than rich in patience, rich in love, or any other grace? O great reason for it; when the creature comes to lay claim to pardon of sin, the favour of God, and Heaven it self, it is not love, patience, &c. but faith alone that lays down the price of all these. Not Lord pardon, save me, here is my love and patience for it: but here is Christ, and the price of his blood, which faith presents thee for the full purchase of them all; and this leads to a third, and indeed the chief of all.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, The high office that faith is set in above other graces, in the business of our justification before God. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*, Rom. 5. 1. Not justified by love, repentance, patience, or any other grace beside faith. O how harsh doth it sound in a Christians ear, justifying patience, justifying repentance? and if they were concern'd in the act of justification, as faith is, the name would as well become them, as it doth faith it self. But we find this appropriated to faith, and the rest hedg'd out from having to do in the act of justification, though included and supposed in the person who is justified. It is faith that justifies without works. This is *Paul's* task to prove, Rom. 3. But this faith which justifies, is not dead or idle, but a lively working faith which seems to be *James* his design, chap. 2. of his *Epistle*. As God did single Christ out from all others, to be the only Mediator betwixt him and man, and his righteousness to be the meritorious cause of our justification; so he hath singled faith out from all the other graces, to be the instrument or means for appropriating this righteousness of Christ to our selves. Therefore as this righteousness is called *the righteousness of God*, and opposed to our own righteousness (though wrought by God in us) Rom. 10. 3. because it is wrought by Christ for us, but not inherent in us as the other is: So also it is called *the righteousness of faith*, Rom. 4. 11, 13. Not the righteousness of repentance, love or any other grace. Now wherefore is it called the righteousness of faith and not of love, repentance, &c? Surely, not that faith it self is our righteousness; then we should be justified by works, while we are justified by faith, contrary to the Apostle, who opposeth Faith and Works, Rom. 4.

In a word, then we should be justified by a righteousness of our own; for faith is a grace inherent in us, and as much our own work, as any grace besides is. But this is as contrary to the same Apostles doctrine, *Phil.* 3. 9. where our own righteousness, and the righteousness which is by faith are declared to be inconsistent. It can therefore be called the righteousness of faith for this reason and no other; because faith is the only grace whose office it is to lay hold on Christ, and so to appropriate his righteousness for justification to our souls. Christ and faith are relatives, which must not be sever'd. Christ he is the treasure, and faith the hand which receives it. Christs righteousness is the robe, faith the hand that puts it on; so that it is Christ who is the treasure, by his blood he dischargeth our debt, and not faith; whose office is only to receive Christ, whereby he becomes ours. It is Christs righteousness that is the robe which covers our nakedness, and makes us beautiful in Gods eye, only faith hath the honour to put the robe on the soul; and it is no small honour that is therein put upon faith above other graces. As God graced *Moses* exceedingly above the rest of his brethren (the *Israelites*) when he was called up the Mount to receive the Law from Gods

mouth, while they had their bounds set them, to stand waiting at the bottom of the hill, till he brought it down to them; so doth God highly honour faith; to call this up as the grace, by whose hand he will convey this glorious priviledge of justification over to us.

Quest. But why is Faith rather than any grace else employed in this act?

Ans. 1. Because there is no grace hath so proper a fitness for this office as faith. Why hath God appointed the eye to see, and not the ear? why the hand to take our food, rather than the foot? It is easily answered, because these members have a particular fitness for these functions, and not the other. Thus faith hath a fitness for this work peculiar to it self; we are justified not by giving any thing to God what we do, but by receiving from God what Christ hath done for us. Now faith is the only receiving grace, and therefore only fit for this office.

Secondly, There is no grace that God could trust his honour so safely with in this business of justification, as with faith. The great design God hath in justifying a poor sinner, is to magnifie his free mercy in the eye of his creature, this is writ in such fair characters in the Word, that he which runs may read it. God was resolved that his free mercy should go away with all the honour, and the creature should be quite cut out from any pretensions to partnership with him therein. Now no way like to this of being justified by faith, for the securing and safe-guarding the glory of Gods free grace, Rom. 3. 25, 26. When the Apostle hath in some verses together discoursed of the free justification of a sinner before God, he goes on to shew how this can be the very comb, yea, throat of all self-exalting thoughts, ver. 27. *Where is boasting then? it is excluded: By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.* Princes of all wrongs, most disdain and abhor to see their Royal Bed defiled; so jealous they have been of this, that for the prevention of all suspicion of such a foul fact, it hath been of old the custom of the greatest *Monarchs*, that those who were their Favourites, and admitted into nearest attendance upon their own persons and *Queens*, should be *Eunuchs*; such whose very disability of nature, might remove all suspicion of any such attempt by them. Truly God is more jealous of having the glory of his grace ravish'd by the pride, and self glorying of the creature, than ever any Prince was of having his *Queen* deflowred. And therefore to secure it from any such horrid abuse, he hath chosen faith, this *Eunuch-grace* (as I may so call it) to stand so nigh him, and be employed by him in this high act of grace, whose very nature (being a self-emptying grace) renders it incapable of entering into any such design against the glory of Gods grace: faith hath two hands; with one it pulls off its own Righteousness, and throws it away, as *David* did *Saul's* Armor; with the other it puts on Christs Righteousness over the souls shame, as that in which it dares alone see God, or be seen of him. *This makes it impossible* (faith learned and holy Master *Ball*) *how to conceive that faith and works should be conjoin'd*

conjoin'd as con-causes in justification; seeing the one, that is faith, attributes all to the free grace of God; the other, that is works, challenge to themselves: The one (that is faith) will aspire no higher, but to be the instrumental cause of free remission; the other can sit no lower, but to be matter of justification, if any cause at all; for if works be accounted to us in the room, or place of exact obedience in free justification, do not they supply the place? are they not advanced to the dignity of works compleat and perfect in justification from justice? (Treatise of Covenant of Grace, pag. 70.)

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The mighty influence, yea, universal, that faith hath upon all her filter-graces, speaks her the chief of them all. What makes the Sun so glorious a creature, but because it is a common good, and serves all the lower World with light and influence? Faith is a grace, whose Ministry God useth as much for the good of the spiritual World in the Saints (called in Scripture the *Kaini nrisit*, the new Creation, Gal. 6. 15.) as he doth the Sun for the corporal. *Nothing is hid from the heat of the Sun*, Psal. 19. 6. And no grace that faiths influence reacheth not unto.

First, Faith finds all the graces with work. As the rich Tradesman gives out his wool, some to this man, and some to that, who all spin and work of the stock he gives them out, so that when he ceaseth to trade, they must also, because they have no stock but what he affords them. Thus faith gives out to every grace, what they act upon. If faith trades not, neither can they. To instance in one or two graces for all the rest. Repentance, this is a sweet grace, but set on work by faith. *Nineveh's Repentance* is attributed unto their faith, *Jonah* 3. 5. *The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-cloth.* It is very like indeed that their Repentance was no more than legal, but it was as good as their faith was; if their faith had been better, so would their Repentance also. All is whist and quiet in an unbelieving soul; no news of Repentance, nor noise of any complaint made against sin, till faith begins to stir. When faith presents the threatening, and binds the truth and terror of it to the Conscience, then the sinner hath something to work upon. As light actuates colours, and brings the eye acquainted with its object, whereupon it falls to work, so doth faith actuate sin in the Conscience; Now musing thoughts will soon rise, and like clouds, thicken apace into a storm, till they bespread the soul with an universal blackness of horror and trembling for sin: But then also the creature is at a loss, and can go no further in the business of Repentance, till faith sends in more work from the promise, by presenting a pardon therein, to the returning soul; which no sooner is heard and believed by the creature, but the work of Repentance goes on apace. Now the cloud of horror and terror, which the fear of wrath (from consideration of the threatening) had gather'd in the Conscience, dissolves into a soft rain

of Evangelical sorrow, at the Report which faith takes from the promise.

Love is another heavenly grace: But faith gathers the fuel that makes this fire; speak Christian, whose soul now flames with love to God, was it always thus? no sure, there was a time (I dare say for thee) when thy Hearth was cold, not a spark of this fire to be found on the Altar of thy heart. How is it then Christian, that now thy soul loves God, whom before thou didst scorn and hate? surely thou hast heard some good News from Heaven, that hath chang'd thy thoughts of God, and turn'd the stream of thy love which ran another way, into this happy Channel. And who can be the messenger besides faith, that brings any good News from Heaven to the soul? It is faith that proclaims the promise; opens Christs excellencies, pours out his Name, for which the Virgins love him; when faith hath drawn a Character of Christ out of the Word, and presented him in his love and loveliness to the soul, now the creature is sweetly inveigled in his affections to him; now the Christian hath a copious Theam to enlarge upon in his thoughts, whereby to endear Christ more and more unto him. *Unto him that believes, he is precious*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. and the more faith, the more precious. If we should sit in the same Room by the dearest friend we had in all the World, and our eyes were held from seeing him, we would take no more notice of him, and give no more respect to him, than to a meer stranger; But if one should come and whisper us in the ear, and tell us, this is such a dear friend of yours, that once laid down his life to save yours, that hath made you heirs to all the goodly Estate that he hath, will you not shew your Respect to him? O how our hearts would work in our breasts, and make haste to come forth in some passionate expression of our dear affection to him? yea, how heartily ashamed would we be for our uncivil and unbecoming behaviour towards him, though occasioned by our ignorance of him? Truly thus it is here; so long as faiths eye hath a mist before it, or is unactive, and as it were asleep in the dull Habit, the Christian may sit very nigh Christ in an Ordinance, in a providence, and be very little affected with him, and drawn out in loves to him. But when faith is awake to see him as he passeth by in his love and loveliness, and active to make report to the soul of the sweet excellencies it sees in Christ, as also of his dear bleeding love to his soul; the Christians love now cannot chuse but spring and leap in his bosom at the voice of faith, as the Babe did in *Elizabeth's* womb at the salutation of her cousin *Mary*.

Secondly, As faith sets the other graces on work, by actuating their objects, about which they are conversant; so faith helps them all to work by fetching strength from Christ to act and re-inforce them; faith is not only the instrument to receive the Righteousness of Christ for our Justification, but also it is the great instrument to receive grace from Christ for our Sanctification; *Of his fulness we receive grace for grace*, Joh. 1. 16. But how do we receive it? even by faith; faith unites the soul to Christ; and as by a pipe laid close to the mouth of a

A a a

fountain,

fountain, water is carried to our Houses for the supply of the whole family; so by faith, is derived to the soul supply in abundance, for the particular offices of all the several graces. *He that believes, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters, Joh. 7. 38.* That is, he that hath faith, and is careful to live in the exercise of it, shall have a flow and an encrease of all other graces, called here *living waters*. Hence it is, that the Saints, when they would advance to a high pitch in other graces, they pray for the encrease of their faith. Our Saviour, *Luke 17. 3, 4.* sets his Apostles a very hard Lesson, when he would wind up their love to such a high pitch, as to forgive their offending brother seven times in a day; Now mark, *vers. 5.* The Apostles (apprehending the difficulty of the duty) said unto the Lord, *Encrease our faith.* But why did they not rather say, encrease our love, seeing that was the grace they were to exercise in forgiving their brother? Surely it was because love hath its encrease from faith; if they could get more faith on Christ, they might be sure they should have more love to their brother also. The more strongly they could believe on Christ for the pardon of their own sins, not seven, but seventy times in a day committed against God, the more ease it would be to forgive their brother offending themselves seven times a day; which interpretation, our Saviours Reply to their prayer for faith favours, *vers. 6.* *And the Lord said, if ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say to this Sycamore-tree, be thou plucked up by the roots, and it should obey you.* Where Christ shews the efficacy of justifying faith, by the power of a faith of miracles; As if he had said, you have hit on the right way to get a forgiving spirit; it is faith indeed that would enable you to conquer the unmercifulness of your hearts; though it were as deeply rooted in you, as this Sycamore-Tree is in the ground, yet by faith you should be able to pluck it up; when we would have the whole Tree fruitful, we think we do enough to water the Root, knowing what the Root sucks from the earth, it will soon disperse into the branches. Thus, that sap and fatness, faith, which is the radical grace, draws from Christ, will be quickly diffused through the branches of the other graces, and tasted in the pleasantness of their fruit.

Thirdly, Faith defends the Christian in the exercise of all his graces. *By faith we stand, Rom. 11. 20.* As a Soldier under the protection of his shield, stands his ground, and doth his duty, notwithstanding all the shot that are made against him, to drive him back; when faith fails, then every grace is put to the run and rout. *Abrahams* simplicity and sincerity, how was it put to disorder, when he dissembled with *Abimelech* concerning his wife? And why, but because his faith failed him? *Jobs* patience received a wound, when his hand grew weary, and his shield of faith, which should have covered him, hung down. Indeed no grace is safe, if from under the wing of faith; Therefore to secure *Peter* from falling from all grace, Christ tells him, *He had pray'd that his faith should not fail, Luke 22. 32.* This was the reserve that Christ took care should be kept, to recover his other graces, when foiled by the enemy, and to bring him off that encounter, wherein he was so sadly bruised and bro-

ken. It is said, that Christ could not do many mighty things in his own Country, because of their unbelief, *Mat. 13. 58.* Neither can Satan do any great hurt to the Christian, so long as faith is upon the place. It is true, he aims to fight faith above all, as that which keeps him from coming at the rest, but he is not able long to stand before it. Let a Saint be never so humble, patient, devout, alas, Satan will easily pick some hole or other in these graces, and break in upon him when he stands in the best array; if faith be not in the field to cover these. This is the grace that makes him face about, and take him to his heels, *1 Pet. 5. 9.*

Fourthly, Faith alone procures acceptance with God for all the other graces, and their works. *By faith Abel offered that excellent sacrifice,* to which God gave such a gracious testimony, *Heb. 11. 4.* When the Christian hath wrought hardest in a day, and hath spun the finest, evenest thread of obedience at the wheel of duty; he is afraid to carry home his work at night with an expectation of any acceptance at Gods hands for his works sake. No, it is faith he makes use of, to present it through Christ to God for acceptance; we are said, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* *To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;* that is, by faith in Christ; for without faith, Christ makes none of our sacrifices acceptable. God takes nothing kindly, but what the hand of faith presents; And so prevalent is faith with God, that he will take light gold, broken services at her hand; which, were they to come alone, would be rejected with indignation. As a favourite that hath the ear of his Prince, finds it ease to get his poor kindred entertained at Court also. So *Joseph* brought his Brethren into *Pharaohs* presence with great demonstrations of favour shewn them by him for his sake. And *Esther* wooed *Mordecai* into a high preferment in *Ahasuerus* Court, who upon his own credit could get no further than to sit at the Gate. Thus faith brings those works and duties into Gods presence, which else were sure to be shut out, and pleading the righteousness of Christ, procures them to be received into such high favour with God, that they become his delight, *Prov. 15. 8.* and as a pleasant perfume in his nostrils, *Mal. 3. 4.*

Fifthly, Faith brings in succours, when other graces fail. Two ways the Christians graces may fail; in their activity, or in their evidence.

1. In their activity; it is low water sometimes with the Christian. He cannot act so freely and vigorously then, as at another time when the Tyde runs high, through Divine assistances that flow in amain upon him; those temptations which he could at one time snap asunder, as easily as *Samson* did his cords of flax, at another time he is sadly hampered with, that he cannot shake them off. Those duties which he performs with delight and joy, when his grace is in a healthful plight, at another time he pants and blows at; as much as a sick man doth to go up a Hill, so heavily doth he find them come off. Were not the Christian, think you, ill now on it, if he had no comings in, but from his own shop of duty? Here now is the excellency of faith, it succours the Christian in this his bankrupt condition. As *Joseph* got

got over his Brethren to him, and nourish'd them out of his Granaries all the time of famine; so doth faith the Christian in this his penury of grace and duty. And this it doth two ways.

First, By laying claim to the fulness of that grace which is in Christ as its own; Why art thou dejected, O my soul, faith the Christians faith, for thy weak grace? There is enough in Christ, all fulness dwells in him; It pleased the Father it should be so, and that to pleasure thee in thy wants and weaknesses. It is a ministerial fulness, as the clouds carry Rain not for themselves, but the earth, so doth Christ his fulness of grace for thee. *He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,* 1 Cor. 1. 30. When the Rags of the Christians own righteousness discourage and shame him, faith hath a Robe to put on, that covers all this uncomeliness; Christ is my righteousness, faith faith, and in him we are compleat, Col. 2. 10. Faith hath two hands, a working hand, and a receiving hand; and the receiving hand relieves the working hand, or else there would be a poor house kept in the Christians bosom. We find Paul himself but in a starving condition, for all the comfort his own graces could with their earnings afford him; he is a wretched man in his own account, if these be all he hath to live upon, Rom. 7. 24. yet even then, when he sees nothing in his own Cupboard, his faith puts forth its receiving hand to Christ, and he is presently set at a rich Feast, for which you find him giving thanks, *vers. 25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Secondly, Faith succours the Christian in the weakness and inactivity of his graces, by applying the promises for the Saints perseverance in grace. It brings great comfort to a sick man, though very weak at present, to hear his physician tell him, that though he is low and feeble, yet there is no fear he will dye. The present weakness of grace is sad, but the fear of falling quite away far sadder. Now faith, and only faith, can be the messenger to bring this good news to the soul, that it shall persevere. Sense and Reason are quite pos'd and dunced here. It seems impossible to them, that such a bruised Reed should bear up against all the counterblasts of Hell, because they consider only what grace it self can do, and finding it so over-match'd by the power and policy of Satan, think it but rational to give the Victory to the stronger side. But faith, when it seeth symptoms of death in the Saints grace, finds life in the promise, and comforts the soul with this, that the faithful God will not suffer his grace to see corruption; he hath undertook the physicking of his Saints, *Joh. 15. 2. Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* When Hazael came to enquire of Elisha for his sick Master, whether he should live or die; the Prophet sent him with this answer back unto the King his Master, *Thou mayest certainly recover, howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely dye,* 2 Kings 8. 10. That is, he might certainly recover for all his disease, but he should certainly dye by the trayterous bloody hand of Hazael his servant: give me leave only to allude to this, when

the Christian consults with his faith, and enquires of it, whether his weak grace will fail or hold out, dye or live; faiths answer is, *Thy weak grace may certainly dye and fall away, but the Lord hath shewed me it shall live and persevere,* that is, in regard of its own weakness, and the mutability of mans nature, the Christians grace might certainly dye and come to nothing; but God hath shewn faith in the promise, that it shall certainly live and recover out of its lowest weakness. What David said in regard of his House, that every Christian may say in regard of his grace. Though his grace be not so with God, so strong, so unchangeable in it self; yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and my desire, 2 Sam. 23. 5. This salt of the Covenant is it, that shall keep (faith faith) thy weak grace from corruption. *Why art thou cast down (faith the Psalmist) O my soul? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God,* Psal. 42. 11. The health of David's countenance, was not in his countenance, but in his God, and this makes his faith silence his fears, and to temporarily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near soever he now lies to the graves mouth) when he shall yet praise him. The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace (faith faith) but in God, who is thy God; therefore I shall yet live and praise him. I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glass but this.

Secondly, The Christians grace may fail in the evidence of it. It may disappear, as stars do in a cloudy night; how oft do we hear the Christian say in an hour of desertion and temptation, I know not whether I love God or no in sincerity? I dare not say I have any true godly sorrow for sin; Indeed I have thought formerly these graces had a being in me; but now I am at a loss; what to think, yet, sometimes I am ready to fear the worst. Now in this dark benighted state, faith under-girds the souls ship, and hath two Anchors it casts forth, whereby the soul is staid from being driven upon the devouring quick-sands of despair and horror.

First, Faith makes a discovery of the rich mercy in Christ to poor sinners, and calls the soul to look to it, when it hath lost the sight of his own grace. It is no small comfort to a man that hath lost his acquaintance for a debt paid, when he remembers that the man he deals with is a merciful good man, though his discharge is not presently to be found. That God whom thou hast to do with, is very gracious; what thou hast lost, he is ready to restore; (the evidence of thy grace I mean) David begg'd this and obtain'd it, *Psal. 51. Yea, faith faith, if it were true what thou fearest, that thy grace was never true;* there is mercy enough in Gods heart to pardon all thy former hypocrisie, if now thou comest in the sincerity of thy heart, and so faith persuades the soul by an act of adventure to cast it self upon God in Christ; wilt not thou, faith faith, expect to find as much mercy at Gods hands, as thou canst look for at a mans? It is not beyond the Line of created

✓ Mercy, to forgive many unkindnesses, much falseness and unfaithfulness, upon an humble sincere acknowledgement of the same. The world is not so bad, but it abounds with Parents that can do thus much for their children, and Masters for their servants: And is that hard for God to do, which is so easy in his creature? thus faith vindicates Gods Name. And so long as we have not lost the sight of Gods merciful heart, our head will be kept above water, though we want the evidence of our own grace.

Secondly, Faith goes further; When the Christian cannot see this grace or that in his own bosome, then faith makes a discovery of them in the promise, where they may be had. And 'tis some comfort, though a man hath no bread in his Cupboard, to hear there is some to be had in the Market. O faith the complaining Christian, there were some hope, if I could find but those relentings and meltings of soul which others have in their bosomes for sin; then I could run under the shadow of that promise, and take comfort, *Blessed are they which mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Matth. 5. but alas, my heart is as hard as the flint. Well faith faith, for thy comfort know, there are not only promises to the mourning soul and broken heart, but there are promises, that God will break the heart, and give a *spirit of mourning*; so for other graces, not only promises to those that fear God, but to put the fear of God into our hearts. Not only promises to those that walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgements, but also to put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his Statutes, Ezek. 36. 27. Why then O my soul, dost sit here bemoaning thy self fruitlessly, for what thou say'st thou hast not, when thou know'st where thou may'st have it for going? As Jacob said to his sons, *Why do ye look one upon another? behold I have heard there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not dye*, Gen. 42. 1, 2. Thus faith rouseth the Christian out of his amazed thoughts, upon which his troubled spirit dwells like one destitute of counsel, not knowing what to do; and turns his bootless complaints, wherein he must necessarily pine and starve, into fervent prayer for that grace he wants. There is bread in the promise (faith faith) sit not here languishing in a sluggish despondency, but get you down upon your knees, and humbly, but valiantly, besiege the Throne of grace for grace in this time of need. And certainly, the Christian may sooner get a new evidence for his grace, by pleading the promise, and plying the Throne of grace, than by yielding so far to his unbelieving thoughts, as to sit down, and melt away his strength and time in the bitterness of his spirit, (which Satan dearly likes) without using the means, which he will never do to any purpose, till faith brings thus much encouragement from the promise, that what he wants is there to be had freely and fully.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, As faith succours the Christian when his other graces fail him most, so it brings in his comfort, when they most abound. Faith is to the Christian, as *Nebuchadnezzar* was to *Artaxerxes*, Nehem. 2. 1. Of all the

graces, this is the Christians Cup-bearer. The Christian takes the wine of joy out of faiths hand, rather than any other grace, Rom. 15. 13. *The God of peace fill you with joy in believing*. It is observable, 1 Pet. 1. to see how the Apostle there doth as it were cross his hands, as once Jacob did in blessing his son Joseph's children, and gives the preheminance to faith, attributing the Christians joy to his faith, rather than to his love; *vers. 8. Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Mark, believing ye rejoice, here is the door, the Christians chief joy, yea, all his fiduciary joy comes in at. It is Christ that we are in this respect allowed only to rejoice in, Phil. 3. 3. *For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*; where Christ is made the sole subject of our rejoicing fiduciarily, in opposition to all else; even our graces themselves, which become flesh, when thus rejoiced and gloried in. Christs blood is the wine that only glads the heart of God by way of satisfaction to his justice, and therefore only that can bring true gladness into the heart of man. When Christ promiseth the Comforter, he tells his disciples from what vessel he should draw the wine of joy that he was to give them, *John. 16. 15. He shall take of mine, and shall shew it you*. No grape of our own Vine is prest into this sweet Cup; as if Christ had said, when he comes to comfort you with the pardon of your sins, he shall take of mine, not any thing of yours; my blood by which I purchased your peace with God; not your own tears of repentance, by which you have mourned for your sins. All the blessed priviledges which believers are in-stated into, they are the fruits of Christs purchase, not of our earnings. Now the Christians joy flowing in from Christ, and not any thing that the poor creatures doth or hath; hence it comes to pass, that faith above all the graces, brings in the Christians joy and comfort, because this is the grace that improves Christ, and what is Christs, for the souls advantage; as of grace, so of comfort. Faith is the good spy that makes discovery of the excellencies in Christ, and then makes report of all to the soul it sees in him, and knows of him. It is Faith that broacheth the Promises, turns the Cock, and sets them a running into the soul. It doth not only shew the soul how excellent Christ is, and what dainties are in the Promises; but it applies Christ to the soul, and carves out the sweet viands that are disht forth in the Promises; yea, it puts them into the very mouth of the soul, it masticates and grinds the Promise so, that the Christian is filled with its strength and sweetness. Till faith comes and brings news of the souls welcome, O how maidenly and uncomfortably do poor creatures sit at the Table of the Promise? like *Hannah*, they weep and eat not; no alas, they dare not be so bold; but when faith comes, then the soul falls to, and makes a satisfying meal indeed; no dish on the Table but faith will taste of. Faith knows God sets them not on, to go off untouched. It is, though an humble, yet a bold grace, because it knows it cannot be so bold with God in his own way, as it is welcome.

CHAP. III.

Sin of Unbelief

Sheweth Unbelief to have the precedency among Sins, as Faith hath among Graces.

Use 1. **I**S Faith the chief of Graces? this may help us to conceive of the horrible nature of Unbelief. This surely will deserve as high a place among Sins, as Faith among Graces. Unbelief, it is the *Beelzebub*, the Prince of sins. As faith is the radical grace, so is unbelief a radical sin, a sinning sin. As of all sinners, those are most infamous, who are ring-leaders and make others sin, which is the brand that God hath set upon *Jeroboam's* name, *Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who sinn'd, and made Israel to sin*, 1 Kings 14. 16. So among sins they are most horrid that are most productive of other sins; such a one is unbelief above any other. It is a ring-leading sin, a sin-making sin. The first poisonous breath which *Eve* suck'd in from the tempter, was sent in these words, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* Gen. 3. 1. As if he had said, consider well on the matter, do you believe God meant so? can you think so ill of God, as to believe he would keep the best fruit of the whole garden from you? this was the Traytors gate, at which all other sins entred into her heart; and it continues to this day of the same use to Satan, for the hurrying souls into other sins, called therefore *an evilheart of unbelief, in departing from God*, Heb. 3. 12. The Devil sets up this sin of unbelief, as blind betwixt the sinner and God; that the shot which come from the threatening, and are level'd at the sinners breast, may not be dreaded and feared by him; and then the wretch can be as bold with his lust as the Pioneer is at his work, when once he hath got his basket of earth between him and the enemies bullets. Nay, this unbelief doth not only choak the bullets of wrath, which are sent out of the Laws fiery mouth, but it damps the motions of grace which come from the Gospel; all the offers of love which God makes to an unbelieving heart, they fall like seed into dead earth, or like sparks into a river, they are out as soon as they fall into it.

The Word (it is said, Heb. 4. 2.) *did not profit them, nothing mixed with faith in them that heard it.* The strength of the whole body of sin lies in this lock of unbelief. There is no mastering of a sinner, while unbelief is in power; this will carry all arguments away (whether they be from Law or Gospel) that are pressed upon him, as easily as *Samson* did the doors, posts, with bar and all from the City *Gaza*, Judg. 16. 2. It is a sin that doth keep the field, one of the last of all others; that which the sinner is last convinced of, and the Saint ordinarily last conqueror of. It is one of the chief strengths, and fastness unto which the Devil retreats, when other sins are routed. O how oft do we hear a poor sinner confess and bewail other sins (he hath lived in former) with brinish tears, but will not hearken yet to the offer of mercy in Christ; bid him believe on Christ, and he shall be saved, (which was the doctrine of *Paul* and *Silas* preach'd to the trembling

Jaylor, Acts 16. 31.) alas he dares not, he will not, you can hardly persuade him it is his duty to do so. The Devil hath now betaken himself to this City of gates and bars, where he stands upon his guard; and the more strongly to fortify himself in it, he hath the most specious pretences for it, of any other sin. It is a sin that he makes the humbled soul commit, out of a fear of sinning; and so stabs the good Name of God, for fear of dishonouring him by a saucy presumptuous faith. Indeed it is a sin by which Satan intends to put the greatest scorn upon God, and unfold all his cankered malice against him at once. It is by faith that the Saints have all obtain'd a good report; yea, it is by the Saints faith, that God hath a good report in the world; and by unbelief, the Devil doth his worst, to raise an evil report of God in the world; as if he were not what his own promise, and his Saints faith witness him to be. In a word, it is a sin that hell gapes for of all other. There are two sins that claim a preheminance in hell, *Hypocrisie* and *Unbelief*; and therefore other sinners are threaten'd to have their portion with hypocrites, Mat. 24. 5. and with unbelievers, Luke 12. 46. As if those infernal Mansions were taken up principally for these, and all others were but inferiour prisoners. But of the two, unbelief is the greatest, and that which may with an *Emphasis*, be called above this or any other, *the damning sin*. He that believes not, is condemned already, Joh. 3. 18. he hath his *Mittimus* already to *Jayl*; yea, he is in it already in a sense; he hath the brand of a damned person on him. The Jews are said, Rom. 11. 32. *to be shut up in unbelief*. A surer prison the Devil cannot keep a sinner in. Faith shuts the soul up in the promise of life and happiness, as God shut *Noah* into the Ark. It is said, Gen. 7. 16. *the Lord shut him in*; Thus faith shuts the soul up in Christ, and the Ark of his Covenant from all fear of danger, from heaven or hell; and on the contrary, unbelief shuts a soul up in guilt and wrath, that there is no more possibility of escaping damnation for an unbeliever, than for one to escape burning, that is shut up in a fiery Oven; no help can come to the sinner, so long as this bolt of unbelief is on the door of his heart. As our salvation is attributed to faith, rather than to other graces, though none wanting in a saved person; so sinners damnation and ruine is attributed to their unbelief, though other sins found with it in the person damned; The Spirit of God passeth over the Jews hypocrisie, murmuring, rebellion, and lays their destruction at the door of this one sin of unbelief, Heb. 3. 19. *They could not enter in because of unbelief*. O sinners, (you who live under the Gospel I mean) if you perish, know before-hand what is your undoing, it is your unbelief that does it. If a Malefactor that is condemned to dye, be offered his life by the Judge, upon reading a Psalm of mercy, and he reads it not, we may say his not reading hangs him,

oh! unbelief

hangs him. The promise of the Gospel is this *Psalm* of mercy, which God offers in his Son to Law-condemned sinners; believing is reading this *Psalm* of mercy; if thou believest not, and art damned, thou goest to hell rather for thy final unbelief, than any of thy other sins, for which a discharge is offered thee upon thy receiving Christ, and believing on him. Let this cause us all to rise up against this sin, as the *Philistines* did against *Sampson*, whom they called the destroyer of their Countrey, *Judg.* 16. 24. This is the destroyer of your souls, and that is worse; yea, it destroys them with a blouder hand than other sins do, that are not aggravated with this. We find two general heads of inditements, upon which the whole world of sinners shall be condemned at the great day, 2 *Thes.* 1. 8. where Christs coming to judgement is exprest; and those miserable undone creatures, that shall fall under his condemning sentence, they are comprized in these two; such as *know not God*, and such as *obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. The *Heathens* negative unbelief of the Gospel, shall not be charged upon them, because they never had it preach'd to them; No, they shall be sent to hell for *not knowing God*, and so shall escape with a lighter

damnation by far, than *Jews* or Christian *Gentiles*, to whom the Gospel hath been preach'd (though to some of these, with a stronger and longer continued beam of light, than others.) The dismal charge which shall be brought against these, will be, that they have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, that is, not believed on Christ, called therefore *the obedience of faith*, *Röm.* 16. 26. And certainly we cannot but think, that there shall be a torment proper to these Gospel-refusers, which those that never had the offer of grace, shall not feel in hell. And among those that obey not the Gospel, the greatest vengeance waits for them that have had the longest and passionatest treaty of mercy allowed them. These are they who put God to the greatest expence of mercy, and therefore must necessarily expect the greatest proportion of wrath and vengeance to be measured to them; yea, their unbelief puts Christ and the grace of God in him, to the greatest shame and scorn that is possible for creatures to do; and it is but righteous that God should therefore put their unbelief and themselves with it to the greatest shame before men and Angels, of any other sinners.

CHAP. IV.

Some Arguments to make us serious in the tryal of our Faith, with one Direction taken from the manner of the Spirits working Faith.

Use 2. **I**S Faith the chief of Graces? Let this make us the more curious and careful, that we be not cheated in our faith. There are some things of so inconsiderable worth, that they will not pay us for the pains and care we take about them; and there to be choice and scrupulous, is folly; to be negligent and incurious, wisdom. But there are other things of such worth, and weighty consequence, that none but he that means to call his wisdom in question, can be willing to be mistaken or cozened in. Who that is wise, would pay, as for a precious stone, and have a pebble, or at best a *Brissal-stone* put upon him for his money? Who, when his life is at stake, and knows no way to save it, but by getting some one rich Drugg which is very scarce, but to be had, would not be very careful to have the right? O my dear Friends, doth it not infinitely more concern you, to be careful in your merchandize for this pearl of precious faith? can you be willing to take the Devils false sophisticated ware off his hand? a mock-faith which he would cheat you with, rather than obtain the faith unfeigned, which God hath to give unto his children; called therefore *the faith of Gods Elect*? Will the Devils dreggs, that are sure to kill thee, serve thy turn, when thou art offer'd by God himself a rich Drugg that will cure thee? When thou goest to buy a garment, thou askest for the best piece of stuff, or cloth in the shop. In the Market thou wouldst have the best meat for thy belly; when with the Lawyer, the best counsel for thy Estate; and of the Physician, the best directions for thy health. Art thou for the

best in all, but for thy soul? Would thou not have a Faith of the best kind also? If a man receives false money, who doth he wrong but himself? and if thou beest gull'd with a false faith, the loss is thy own, and that no small one; thy self will think so, when thou comest to the Bar, and God shall bid thee either pay the debt thou owest him, or go to rot and roar in Hells prison; then how wilt thou be confounded? when thou producest thy faith, and hopest to save thy self with this, that thou believest on the Lord Jesus, but shalt have thy confidence rejected, and God tell thee to thy teeth, it is not faith, but a lye in thy right hand that thou hast got, and therefore he will not accept the payment, though it be Christ himself thou offerest to lay down; nay, that he will give thee up into the Tormentors hand, and that not only for not believing, but also for counterfeiting the King of Heavens coyn, and setting his Name on thy false money; which thou dost by pretending to faith, when it is a false one thou hast in thy bosome. This were enough to awaken your care in the tryal of your faith; but to give some further weight to the Exhortation, we shall cast in these three considerations.

SECT. I.

First, As thy faith is, so are all thy other graces. As a mans marriage is, so are all his children, legitimate, or illegitimate. Thus, as our marriage is to Christ, so all our graces. Now, it is faith by which we are married to Christ. *I have espoused you* one

one husband, faith Paul to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. How, but by their faith? 'Tis faith whereby the soul gives its consent to take Christ for her Husband. Now if our faith be false, then our marriage to Christ is feigned; and if that be feigned, then all our pretended graces are base born, how goodly an out-side soever they have (as a Bastard may have a fair face) they are illegitimate; our humility, patience, temperance, all Bastards; and you know, a bastard was not to enter into the Congregation, Deut. 23. 2. No more shall any bastard-grace, enter into the Congregation of the just in Heaven. He that hath children of his own, will not make anothers Bastard his Heir. God hath children of his own, to inherit Heavens glory, in whose hearts he hath by his own Spirit begotten these heavenly graces, which do truly resemble his own holy nature; surely he will never settle it upon strangers, counterfeit Believers, that are the Devils Brats and By-blows.

Secondly, Consider the excellency of true faith, makes false faith so much the more odious. Because a Kings son is an extraordinary personage, therefore it is so high a crime for an ignoble person to counterfeit himself to be such a one. It is by faith that we become the sons of God, 1 Joh. 12. And what a high presumption is it then, that by a false faith thou committest? Thou pretendest thy self to be a child of God; when no Heaven-blood runs in thy veins, but hast more reason to look for thy kindred in hell, and derive thy pedigree from Satan; this passeth for no less than blasphemy in the account of the Scripture, Rev. 2. 9. *I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.* God loaths such with his heart. A false friend, is worse than an open enemy in mans judgement. And a hypocritical Judas, more abhor'd by God than a bloody Pilate; either therefore get true faith, or pretend to none. The Ape, because he hath the face of a man, but not the soul of a man, is therefore the most ridiculous of all creatures. And of all sinners, none will be put more to shame at the last day, than such as have aped and imitated the Believer in some exterior postures of profession, but never had the spirit of a Believer, so as to perform one vital act of faith. The Psalmist tells us of some, *Whose image God will despise*, Psal. 73. 20. It is spoken chiefly of the wicked mans temporary prosperity (which for its short continuance, is compared to the image or representation of a thing in the fancy of a sleeping man that then is busie, and pleaseth us with many fine pleasing objects, but all are lost, when our sleep leaves us) this God will despise at the great day, when he shall not give heaven and glory, by the estates and honours, that men had in the World, but tumble them down to Hell, if graceless, as well as the poorest Beggar in the World. But there is another sort of persons, whose image God will at that day despise more than these, and that is, the image of all temporary Believers, and unsound Professors, who have a phantastical faith, which they set up, like an image in their imaginations, and dance about it with as many self-pleasing thoughts, as a man doth that is dreaming himself to be some great

Prince; but this great Idol shall then be broken, and the Worshipers of it hild down to Hell with the greatest shame of any other.

Thirdly, None stand at greater disadvantage for the obtaining a true faith, than he who flatters himself with a false one. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool, than of him.* Prov. 26. 12. that is, there is more hope of persuading him; of all fools, the conceited fool is the worst. Pride makes a man incapable of receiving counsel. *Nebuchadnezzar's mind*, is said, *to be hardened in pride*, Dan. 5. 20. There is no reasoning with a proud man; he castles himself in his own opinion of himself, and there stands upon his defence against all Arguments that are brought. Bid a conceited Professor labour for faith, or he is undone; and the man will tell you, that you mistake and knock at the wrong door; It is the ignorant person or prophane you should go to on that errand; he thanks God he is not now to seek for a faith; and thus he blesteth himself in his good condition, when God knows, *he feeds of ashes, but a deceived heart hath so turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his own soul*, nor say, *is there not a lye in my right hand?* Isa. 44. 20. The ignorant prophane person, like the Psalmist's man of low degree, is plain vanity. It is not hard to make themselves to acknowledge as much, that they have nothing, deserve nothing, can look for nothing as they are, but Hell and damnation; but such as pretend to faith, and content themselves with a false one, they are (like the men of high degree) a lye, which is vanity as well as the other, but with a specious cover over it, that hides it; therefore the Devil is forward enough to put poor silly souls on believing, that he may forestall (if he can) the Spirits market, and prevent the creatures obtaining of a true faith, by cheating of it with a counterfeit, like *Jeroboam's* wicked policy, who to keep the Israelites from going to Jerusalem, and hankering after the true worship of God there, set up something like a Religious worship nearer hand at home in the golden Calves; and this pleased many well enough, that they missed not their walk to Jerusalem. O Friends, take heed therefore of being cheated with a false faith. Every one, I know, would have the living child to be hers, and not the dead one. We would all pass for such, as have the true faith, and not the false: but be not your own Judges, appeal to the Spirit of God, and let him with the Sword of his Word come and decide the controversie, which faith is thine, the true or false.

SECT. II.

Secondly, By this time possibly you may be solicitous to know what your faith is, and how you may come to judge of the truth of it. Now for your help therein, take these two directions. One taken from the manner of the Spirits working faith, the other taken from the properties of faith when it is wrought.

First, From the manner of the Spirits working faith in the soul. It is incomparably the greatest work, that passeth upon the soul from the Spirit of Christ;

Christ; It is called, the *ὑπερβαλλόν μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ*, *The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe*, Eph. 1. 19. Observe with what a heap of expressions the Spirit of God loads our weak understanding, that labouring under the weight of them, and finding the difficulty of reaching the significancy of them, we might be the more widened, to conceive of that power, which can never be fully understood by us (being indeed infinite, and so too big to be inclosed within the narrow walls of our understandings) power, greatness of power, exceeding greatness, and lastly, exceeding greatness of his power, that is of God. What Angel in Heaven can tell us, what all these amount to? God (with Reverence be it spoken) sets his whole force to this work. It is compared to no less than *The working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, &c.* *vers.* 20, 21. To raise any one from the dead, is a mighty, an Almighty work; But to raise Christ from the dead, carries more wonder with it, than to raise any other; he had a heavier Grave-stone to keep him down than any besides, the weight of a Worlds sin lay upon him, yet notwithstanding this, he is raised with power by the Spirit, not only out of the grave, but into glory. Now the power God puts forth upon the soul in working faith, is according to this of raising Christ, for indeed the sinners soul is as really dead in sin, as Christs body was in the grave for sin. Now speak, poor creature, art thou any way acquainted with such a power of God, to have been at work in thee? Or dost thou think slightly of believing, and so shew thy self a stranger to this mystery? Certainly this one thing might resolve many (if they desired to know their own state) that they have no faith, because they make faith so trivial and light a matter, as if it were as easie to believe, as to say they do; and it were of no more difficulty to receive Christ into their souls by faith, than to put a bit of bread into their mouths with their hand. Ask some, whether ever such a day or time of Gods power came over their heads, to humble them for sin, drive them out of themselves, and draw them effectually unto Christ; And they may answer you as those did *Peter*, when he ask'd, *Whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed; They said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any holy Ghost*, Acts 19. 2. So these might say, we know not whether there be any such power required to the working of faith or no.

But to descend into a more particular consideration of this powerful work of the Spirit upon the soul for the production of faith; to which it will be necessary to consider what posture the Spirit of Christ finds the soul in before he begins this great work; and then how he makes his addressees to the soul, and what acts he puts forth upon the soul for the working faith.

First, For the posture of the soul; The Spirit finds the creature in such a state, as it neither can, nor will contribute the least help to the work. As

the Prince of the world, when he came to tempt Christ, found nothing in him, to befriend and further his tempting design; so when the Spirit of Christ comes, he finds as little encouragement from the sinner; no party within the Castle of the soul, to side with him, when he comes first to set down before it, and lay siege to it; But all the powers of the whole man in arms against him. Hence it is that so many scornful answers are sent out to the summons that are given sinners to yield. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not*, Joh. 1. 11. Never was any Garrison more resolved to stand out against both the Treaties and Batteries of an assailing enemy, than the carnal heart is against all means, that God useth to reduce it into his obedience. The noblest operations of the soul, they are earthly, sensual, devilish, Jam. 3. 15. So that, except Heaven and Earth can meet; sensual and spiritual please one palate; GOD and the Devil agree; there is no hope that a sinner of himself should like the motion Christ makes, or that with any argument he should be won over to like it, so long as the ground of dislike remains in his earthly, sensual and devilish nature.

Secondly, We proceed to shew how the Spirit makes his addressees to the soul, and what acts he puts forth upon it for the working faith. Now the Spirits address is suited to the several faculties of the soul; the principal of which are these three, *understanding, conscience and will*; These are like three Forts, one within the other, which must all be reduced, before the Town be taken, the sinner I mean subdued to the obedience of faith. And to these the Spirit makes his particular addressees, putting forth an act of Almighty power upon every one of them, and that in this order. First, The Spirit makes his approach to the understanding, and on it he puts forth an act of illumination. The Spirit will not work in a dark shop; the first thing he doth in order to faith, is to beat out a window in the soul, and let in some light from Heaven into it. Hence Believers are said to be *renewed in the spirit of their minds*, Eph. 4. 23. which the same Apostle calleth being *renewed in knowledge*, Col. 3. 10. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature therefore must be opened to see the way of life, before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waft souls to Heaven, like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the Hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sayling to their Port; if so, that prayer might have been spared, which the Psalmist, inspired of God, breaths forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles, Psal. 67. 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all Nations*. As faith is not a naked assent without affiance and intimacy on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If therefore thou continuest still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul.

Again

Again, Secondly, When the Spirit of God hath sprung with a divine light into the understanding, then he makes his address to the conscience, and the act which passeth upon that, is an *act of conviction*, John 16. 8. *He shall convince the world, &c.* Now this conviction is nothing but a reflection of the light that is in the understanding upon the conscience, whereby the creature feels the weight and force of those truths he knows; so as to be brought into a deep sense of them. Light in a direct beam heats not, nor doth knowledge swimming in the brain affect. Most under the Gospel, know that unbelief is a damning sin, and that there is no Name to be saved by, but the Name of Christ; yet how few of those know this convincingly, so as to apply this to their own Consciences, and to be affected with their own deplored state, who are the unbelievers and Christless persons? As he is a convicted Drunkard in Law, who in open Court, or before a lawful Authority, upon clear testimony and deposition of Witnesses, is found and judged to be such: So, he Scripturally is a convicted sinner, who upon the clear evidence of the Word brought against him by the Spirit, is found by his own Conscience (Gods officer in his bosom) to be so; speak now poor creature, did ever such an act of the Spirit of God pass upon thee, as this is? which that thou maist the better discern of, try thy self by these few characters of a convicted person.

First; A sinner truly convicted, is not only convinced of this sin or that sin, but of the evil of all sin. It is an ill sign, when a person seems in a passion to cry out of one sin, and to be senseless of another sin. A per-boyled Conscience is not right, soft in one part, and hard in another; the Spirit of God is uniform in its work.

Secondly, The convicted sinner is not only convinced of acts of sin, but of the state of sin also; he is not only affected with what he hath done (this Law broken, and that mercy abused) but with what his state and present condition is. Peter leads Simon Magus from that one horrid act he committed, to the consideration of that which was worse, the dismal state that he discovered him to be in; *I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*, Acts 8. 23. Many will confess they do not do as they should, who will not think by any means so ill of themselves, that their state is naught, a state of sin and death; whereas the convinced soul freely puts himself under this sentence of death, own his condition; and dissembles not his pedigree; I am a most vile wretch (saith he) a limb of Satan, full of sin, as the Toad is of rank poison; my whole nature lies in wickedness, even as the dead rotten carcass doth in its slime and putrefaction. I am a child of wrath, born to no other inheritance than Hell flames; and if God will now tread me down thither, I have not one righteous syllable to object against his proceedings, but there is that in my own conscience which will clear him from having done me any wrong in my doom.

Thirdly, The convicted sinner doth not only condemn himself for what he hath done and is, but he despairs of himself, as to any thing he can now do

to save himself; many, though they go so far as to confess they are vile wretches, and have lived wickedly, and for this deserve to dye; yet when they have put the rope about their neck by a self-condemning act, they are so far from being convinced of their own impotency, that they hope to cut the rope with their repentance, reformation, and I know not what bundle of good works, which they think shall redeem their credit with God, and recover his favour, which their former sins have unhappily lost them. And this comes to pass, because the plough of conviction did not go deep enough to tear up those secret roots of self-confidence, with which the heart of every sinner is woefully tainted; whereas every soul thoroughly convinced by the Spirit, is a self-despairing soul; he sees himself beyond his own help, like a poor condemned prisoner, laden with so many heavy irons, that he sees it impossible for him to make an escape, with all his skill or strength out of the hands of justice: O friends, look whether the work be once gone thus far in your souls or no. Most that perish, it is not their disease that kills them; but their Physician: they think to cure themselves, and this leaves them incurable. Speak soul, did the Lord ever ferret thee out of this burrow where so many earth themselves? Art thou as much at a loss what to do, as sensible for what thou hast done? Dost thou see Hell in thy sin, and despair in thy self? Hath God got thee out of this *Keilah*, and convinced thee if thou shouldst stay in the self-confidence of thy repentance, reformation and duties, they would all deliver thee up into the hands of Gods justice and wrath, when they shall come against thee? then indeed thou hast escaped one of the finest snares that the wit of Hell can weave.

Fourthly, The convicted sinner is not only convinced of sin, so as to condemn himself, and despair of himself, but he is convinced of a full provision laid up in Christ for self-condemned and self-despairing ones, John 16. *He shall convince the world of sin, verse 9. and of righteousness, verse 10.* And this is as necessary an antecedent to faith, as any of the former. Without this, the soul convinced of sin, is more like to go to the gallows with Judas, or fall on the sword of the Law, as the Jewlour attempted to do on his (when he thought his condition desperate) than think of coming to Christ. Who will go to his door, that hath not wherewithal to relieve him?

The third and last faculty to be dealt with is the Will, and on this (for the production of faith) the Spirit puts forth an *act of renovation*, whereby he doth sweetly, but powerfully encline the Will (which before was rebellious and refractory) to accept of Christ, and make a free deliberate choice of him, for his Lord and Saviour. I say a free choice, not only cudgel'd into him with apprehensions of wrath, as one may run under an enemies penthouse in a storm, whose door he would have passed by in fair weather, and never have look'd that way. Speak soul, dost please thy self in choosing Christ? dost go to Christ, not only for safety, but delight? so the Spouse, *I sat under his shadow with great delight*, Cant. 2. 3. I say a deliberate choice, wherein the soul well weighs the terms Christ is offered on; and

when it hath considered all seriously; likes them, and closeth with him. Like *Ruth*, who when *Naomi* spake the worst she could to discourage her, yet liked her mothers company too well, to lose it for those troubles that attended her; speak soul, hath the Spirit of God thus put his golden key into the lock of thy Will, to open the everlasting door of thy heart to let Christ the King of glory in? Hath he not only open'd the eye of thy understanding, as he awak't *Peter* asleep in prison, and caused the chains of senselessness and stupidity to fall off thy conscience, but also open'd

the Iron gate of thy Will to let thee out of the prison of impenitency, where even now thou wert fast bolted in, yea, brought thee to knock at Heaven door for entertainment, as *Peter* did at the house of *Mary* (where the Church was met) be of good comfort, thou maist know assuredly, that God hath sent not his Angel, but his own Spirit, and hath delivered thee out of the hand of sin, Satan and Justice.

We proceed to the tryal of our faith from the properties of true faith; and we shall content ourselves with three.

CHAP. V.

where our faith is put upon tryal by its obedience; with some particular Characters that faiths obedience is stamp with.

First, This choice excellent faith, it is obediential faith, that is, true faith on the promise, works obedience to the command. *Abraham* is famous for his obedience, no command, how difficult soever, came amiss to him. He is an obedient servant indeed that when he doth but hear his master knock with his foot, leaves all and runs presently to know his masters will and pleasure. Such a servant had God of *Abraham*, who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot? *Isaiah* 41. 2. But what was the Spring that set *Abraham*s obedience a going? See for this *Heb.* 11. 8. By faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, &c. As it is impossible to please God without faith, so it is impossible not to desire to please God with faith. It may well go for an idol faith that hath hands, but doth not work, feet but doth not walk in the Statutes of God. No sooner had Christ cured the woman in the Gospel of her fever, but it is said, she rose and ministered unto them, *Matth.* 8. 15. Thus, the believing soul stands up and ministers unto Christ, in gratitude and obedience. Faith is not lazy, it inclines not the soul to sleep, but work; it sends the creature not to bed, there to snort away his time in ease and sloth, but into the field. The night of ignorance and unbelief, that was the creatures sleeping time; but when the Sun of righteousness riseth, and 'tis day in the soul, then the creature riseth and goeth forth to his labour. The first words that break out of faiths lips, are those of *Saul*, in his hour of conversion, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* *Acts* 9. 6. Faith turns the *Jordan*, and alters the whole course of a man. We were (saith the Apostle) foolish and disobedient, *Tit.* 3. 3. But after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, ver. 4. then the case was altered, as it follows. And therefore take your soul fingers off the promise, and pretend no more to faith, if ye be children of *Belial*, such, whose necks do not freely stoop to this yoke of obedience. The Devil himself may as soon pass for a believer, as a disobedient soul. Other things he can shew as much as you; dost thou

pretend to knowledge? thou wilt not deny the Devil to be a greater Scholar than thy self (I hope) and that in Scripture knowledge; dost thou believe the Scripture to be true? and doth not he more strongly? dost thou tremble? he much more. It is obedience he wants, and this makes him a Devil, and it will make thee like him also.

Quest. But you may ask, what stamp is there to be found on faiths obedience, which will distinguish it from all counterfeits? for there are many fair semblances of obedience, which the Devil will never grutch us the having.

Ans. Take these two Characters of the obedience of faith.

1. Faiths obedience begins at the heart, and from thence it diffuseth and dilates it self to the outward man, till it over-spreads the whole man in a sincere endeavour. As in natural life, the first part that lives is the heart, so the first that faith subdues into obedience is the heart. It is called a faith which purifieth the heart, *Acts* 15. 9. And the believing *Roman* obeyed from the heart the form of Doctrine which was delivered to them, *Rom.* 6. 17. Whereas a false faith, which apes this true faith (as Art imitates nature) begins without, and there ends. All the seeming good works of a counterfeit believer, they are like the beautiful colour in a picture's face, which comes not from a principle of life within, but the Painters pencil without; such were those, *John* 2. 23. who are said to believe on Christ. But, Christ did not commit himself to them, ver. 24. and why? see ver. 25. for he knew what was in man; he cared not for the painted porch and goodly outside; he knew what was in man, and by that knowledge he knew them to be rotten at core, naught at heart, before they were speckled on the skin of their exterior conversation.

Quest. But how may I know my obedience is the obedience of the heart.

Ans. If it comes from love, then it is the obedience of the heart. He commands the heart, that is Master of its love. The Castle must needs yield, when he that keeps it, and hath the keys of it, submits. Love is the affection that governs this Royal Fort

trial
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Fort of mans heart; we give our hearts to them we give our love. And indeed thus it is, that faith brings the heart over into subjection and obedience to God, by putting it under a Law of love, *Gal. 5. 6. faith which worketh by love.* First, faith worketh love, and then it worketh by it. As first the workman sets an edge on his tools, and then he carves and cuts with them; so faith sharpens the souls love to God, and then acts by it; or as a Statuary, to make some difficult piece, before he goes about it, finding his hands nummed with cold, that he cannot handle his tools so nimbly as he should, goes first to the fire, and with the help of its heat chafes them, till they of stiff and numm, become agile and active, then to work he falls; so faith brings the soul, awake and listless enough (God knows) to any duty, unto the meditation of the peerless matchless love of God in Christ to it, and at this fire faith stays the Christians thoughts, till his affections begin to kindle, and come to some sense of his love of God, and now the Christian bestirs himself for God with might and main.

Quest. 2. But how may I know my obedience is from love?

Ans. I'll send you to Saint John to be resolved of this Question, *1 Epist. 5. 3. This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous;* speak soul, what account have you of the Commandments? do you look upon them as an Iron chain about your legs, and think your selves prisoners because you are tied to them? or do you value them as a chain of Gold about your neck, and esteem your selves favourites of the King of Heaven, that he will honour you, to honour him by serving of him? so did as great a Prince as the world had, who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly, *1 Chron. 29.* Not, who am I, that I should be a King over my people? But, that I should have a heart so gracious, to offer willingly with my people? not, who am I, that they should serve me, but that thou wilt honour me with a heart, to serve thee with them? The same Holy man in another place speaks of sin, as his prison, and his obedience as his liberty. *I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts, Psal. 119. 45.* When God gives him a large heart for duty, he is as thankful as a man that was bound in prison is, when he is set at liberty, that he may visit his friends, and follow his calling. The only grievous thing to a loving soul, is to be hindred in his obedience; this is that which makes such a one out of love with the world, and being in it; because it cumbers him in his work, and many times keeps him from it. As a conscionable faithful servant, that is lame or sickly, and can do his master little service, O how it grieves him? Thus, the loving soul bemoans itself, that it should put God to so much cost, and be so unprofitable under it? speak, is this thy temper? blessed art thou of the Lord! There is a jewel of two diamonds, which this will prove thou art owner of, that the Crown jewels, of all the Princes of the world, are not so worthy to be valued with, as a heap of dust or dung, is to be compared with them. The jewel, I mean, is made of this pair of graces, faith and love, they are thine, and with them, God and all that he hath and is. But, if the Commandments of

God be grievous (as they are to every carnal heart) and thou countest thy self at ease, when thou canst make an escape from a duty to commit a sin, as the beast doth, when his collar is off, and he in his fat pasture again; now thou art where thou wouldst be, and can shew some spirits, that thou hast; but when conscience puts on the trace again, thou art dull and heavy again; O it speaks thee to have no love to God, and therefore no faith on God, that is true. That is a jade indeed, who hath no metal but in the pasture.

Secondly, The obedience of faith is full of self-denial. Faith keeps the creature low, as in what he hath, so in what he doth. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, Gal. 2. 10.* As if he had said, I pray mistake me not, when I say, I live, I mean not that I live by my self, or of my self, but Christ in me. I live, and that deliciously, but it is Christ that keeps the house, not I. I mortifie my corruptions, and vanquish temptations, but I am debtor to Christ for the strength. None can write here, as one did under Pope *Adrians* statue (where the place of his birth was named, and those Princes that had prefer'd him from step to step, till he mounted the Popes chair, but God left out of all the story) *Nihil hic Deus fecit, God did nothing for this man.* No, blessed Paul, and in him every believer, acknowledgeth God for sole founder and benefactor too of all the good he hath and doth. They are not ashamed to acknowledge who they are beholden to for all. *These are the children which God hath graciously given me, said Jacob.* And, these the services which God hath graciously assisted me in, faith Paul, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me;* all is *ex dono Dei.* O how chary are Saints of writing themselves Authors of their own good works, parts, or abilities? *Art thou able (said the King to Daniel) to make known unto me the dream which I have seen? Dan. 2. 26.* Now mark, he doth not say, as the proud Astrologers, chap. 2. 4. *We will shew the interpretation;* that fitted their mouths well enough who had no acquaintance with God, but not Daniels, the servant of the living God; though, at that very time he had the secret revealed to him, and could tell the King his dream, yet he was careful to stand clear from any filching of Gods glory from him; and therefore he answers the King, by telling him what his God could do, rather than himself. *There is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets, &c.* And what makes Daniel so self-denying? Truly, it was, because he had obtained this secret of God, by faith at the throne of grace; as you may perceive by chap. 2. v. 15, 16, 17. compared. That faith which taught him to beg the mercy of God, enabled him to deny himself, and give the entire glory of it from himself to God. As Rivers empty their streams again into the bosome of the sea, whence they at first received them; so men give the praise of what they do, unto that, by which they do it. If they attempt any enterprize with their own wit, or industry, you shall have them bring their sacrifice to their wit or net. No wonder to hear *Nebuchadnezzar* (who lookt no higher than himself in building his great Babylon) ascribe the honour of it to himself, *Dan. 4. 30. Is not this great Babylon that I*

have built by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty? But faith teacheth the creature to blot out his own name, and write the Name of God in its room upon all he hath and doth. When the servants, *Luke 19. 16.* came to give up their accounts to the Lord, every one for his pound, those that were faithful to improve it, how humbly and self-denyingly do they speak? *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds,* faith the first, *vers. 16.* *Thy pound hath gained five,* faith another, *vers. 18.* Mark,

not I have gained, but thy pound hath gained ten and five. They do not applaud themselves, but ascribe both principal and increase to God; thy talent hath gained, that is, thy gifts and grace, through thy assistance and blessing, have gained thus much more. Only he that did least, comes in with a brag, and tells his Lord what he had done, *Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.* Least doers are greatest boasters.

CHAP. VI.

The properties of Faith, it is prayerful, and uniform in its acting.

Secondly, True faith is prayerful; prayer it is the child of faith; and as the child bears his fathers name upon him, so doth prayer the name of faith; what is it known by, but by the prayer of faith, *James 5. 15.* Prayer, it is the very natural breath of Faith; supplication and thanksgiving (the two parts of prayer) by these (as the body, by the double motion of the lungs) doth the Christian suck in mercy from God, and breathe back again that mercy in praise to God; but without faith, he could do neither; he could not by supplication draw mercy from God; for *He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,* *Heb. 11. 6.* Neither could he return praises to God without faith. *David's heart must be fix'd, before he can sing and give thanks,* *Psal. 56.* Thanksgiving is an act of self-denial, and 'tis faith alone that will shew us the way out of our own doors; and as the creature cannot pray (I mean acceptably) without faith, so with faith he cannot but pray. The new creature (like our infants in their natural birth) comes crying into the world: And therefore Christ tells it for great news to *Ananias of Saul* (a new-born believer) *behold he prays.* But is that so strange, that one brought up at the foot of *Gamaliel*, and so precise a *Pharisee* as he was, should be found upon his knees at prayer? Truly no, it was that his Sect gloried in, their fasting and praying; and therefore he being strict in this way, was (no doubt) acquainted with this work as to the exterior part of it; but he never had the spirit of prayer, till he now had the Spirit of grace, whereby he believed on Jesus Christ. And therefore if you will try your faith, it must not be by bare praying, but by some peculiar Characters, which faith imprints prayer withal.

Now there are three acts by which faith discovers it self in reference to this duty of prayer.

First, It puts forth such an exciting act, whereby it stirs up the Christian to pray.

Secondly, An assisting act in prayer.

Thirdly, A supporting act after prayer.

Prayer

SECT. I.

First, Faith puts forth an exciting act, whereby it provokes the Christian, and strongly presseth him

to pray. And this it doth, first, by discovering to the creature its own beggary and want, as also the fulness that is to be had from God in Christ for his supply; both which faith useth as powerful motives to quicken the soul up to pray. As the *Lepers* said to one another, *Why sit we here until we dye? if we say we will enter into the City, there is famine to slay us; come let us fall into the Host of the Syrians,* *2 King. 7. 3, 4.* Thus faith rouseth the soul up to prayer; If thou stayest at thy own door, O my soul, thou art sure to starve and dye; what seest thou in thy self, but hunger and famine? no bread there, no money to buy any in thy own purse; Up therefore, haste thee to thy God, and thy soul shall live. O Sirs, are you prest with this inward feeling of your own wants? press to the Throne of grace as the only way left for your supply; you may hope it is faith that sends you; faith is the principle of our new life. *I live* (faith *Paul*) *by the faith of the Son of God,* *Gal. 2. 20.* This life being weak, is craving and crying for nourishment, and that naturally as the new-born babe doth for the milk; if therefore you find this inward sense prompting and provoking of you to cry to God, it shews this principle of life (faith I mean) is in thee.

Objeſt. But may not an unbeliever pray in the sense of his wants, and be inwardly pinched with them, which may make him pray very feelingly?

Anſw. We must distinguish of wants. They are either spiritual or carnal. It cannot be denied but an unbeliever may be very sensible of outward carnal wants, and knock loud at heaven gate for supply. We find them *howling on their beds, and assembling themselves for corn and wine,* *Hosea 7. 14.* There is the cry of the creature, and the cry of the new creature. Every creature hath a natural cry for that which suits their nature. Hence *Psal. 104. 7.* *The young Lyons roar after their prey, and seek their meat of God.* But give the Lyon flesh, and he will not roar for want of graſs; give the Ox graſs, and you shall not hear him lowing for flesh; so give the faithless graceless person his fill of his carnal food, sensual enjoyments, and you shall have little complaints of spiritual wants from him. They are therefore spiritual wants you must try your faith by; if thou canst heartily pray for love to Christ, faith on him, or any other grace, feeling the want of them as a hun-

a hungry man doth of his food; thou may'st conclude safely there is this principle of new life, which (like the veins at the bottom of the stomach) by its sucking puts thee to pain till it be heard and satisfied; for these graces being proper to the new creature, can be truly desired of none but one that is a new creature.

Secondly, Faith excites to prayer from an inward delight it hath in communion with God. *It is good for me (saith the Psalmist) to draw near to God;* now mark the next words, *I have put my trust in the Lord,* Psal. 73. 28. We take delight to be often looking where we have laid up our treasure. This holy man had laid up his soul, and all he had in God by faith, to be kept safely for him, and now he delights oft to be with God, he hath that which invites him into his presence with sweet content. By faith the soul is contracted to Christ; now being espoused to Christ, there is no wonder at all that it should desire communion with him. And prayer being the place of meeting, where Christ and the soul can come the nearest on this side heaven, therefore the believer is seen so often walking that way. Canst thou say poor soul, that this is thy errand, when praying, to see the face of God? can nothing less, and need'st thou nothing more to satisfy and recreate thy soul in prayer, than communion with God? Certainly God hath thy faith, or else thou could'st not so freely bestow thy love on him, and take delight in him.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Faith puts forth an assisting act in prayer; to instance only in two particulars.

First, it assists the soul with importunity; faith is the wrestling grace; it comes up close to God, takes hold of God, and will not easily take a denial. It inflames all the affections, and sets them on work; this is the soul's eye by which it sees the filth, the hell that is in every sin; and seeing affects the heart, and puts it into a passion of sorrow, when the soul spreads its abominations before the Lord. The creature now needs no onion to make it weep; tears come alone freely, as water from a flowing spring. It makes a discovery of Christ to the soul, in the excellencies of his person, love and graces from the glass of the promise; at the sight of which it is even sick with longing after them; and such pangs of love come upon it, as to make it send forth strong cries and supplications for that it so impatiently desires; yea further, faith doth not barely set the creature's teeth on edge, by displaying the excellency of Christ and his grace; but it supplies him with arguments, and helps the soul to wield and use them both valiantly, and victoriously upon the Almighty. Never could he tell what to do with a promise in prayer till now that faith teacheth him to press God with it, humbly, yet boldly. *What wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* saith believing Joshua, ch. 7. 9. as if he had said, thou art so fast bound to thy people by promise and oath, that thou canst not leave them to perish, but thy Name will suffer with them; Faith melts promises into

arguments, as the souldier doth Lead into bullets; and then helps the Christian to send them with a force to Heaven in fervent prayer; whereas a promise in an unbelievers mouth, is like a shot in a Guns mouth, without any fire to put to it. O how cold and dead doth a promise drop from him in prayer? he speaks promises, but cannot pray promises, or press promises. And therefore try thy self, not by naked praying, but by importunity in prayer; and that not by the agitation of thy bodily spirits, but the inward working of thy soul and spirit, whether carried out to plead the promise, and urge it upon God with an humble importunity or not.

Secondly, Faith enables the soul to persevere in the work; false faith may shew some mettle at hand, but he'll jade at length; *Will the hypocrite pray always?* Job 27. 10. No, as the wheel wears with turning, till it breaks at last, so doth the hypocrite; he prays himself weary of praying, something or other will in time make him quarrel with that duty, which he never inwardly liked; whereas the sincere believer hath that in him, which makes it impossible he should quite give over praying, except he should also cease believing; prayer it is the very breath of faith; stop a mans breath, and where is he then? 'tis true, the believer through his own negligence, may find some more difficulty of fetching his praying breath at one time than at another (as a man in a cold doth for his natural breath) alas, who is so careful of his souls health, that needs not bewail this? but for faith to live, and this breath of prayer to be quite cut off is impossible. We see David did but hold his breath a little longer than ordinary, and what a distemper it put him into, till he gave himself ease again by venting his soul in prayer; *I held my peace, and my sorrow stirred, my heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue, Lord make me to know my end,* Psal. 39. Dost thou O man find thy self under a necessity of praying, as the little babe who cannot choose but cry, when it ails or wants any thing, because it hath no other way to help it self, than by crying to hasten its mother or nurse to its help? the Christians wants, sins and temptations continuing to return upon him, he cannot but continue also to pray against them. *From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee,* saith David, Psal. 61. 2. where-ever I am, I'll find thee out; prison me, banish me, or do with me what thou wilt, thou shalt never be rid of me, *I will abide in thy Tabernacle for ever,* vers. 4. But how could David do that, when banish'd from it? surely he means by prayer; the praying Christian carries a Tabernacle with him; as long as David can come at the Tabernacle, he will not neglect it; and when he cannot through sickness, banishment, &c. then he will look towards it, and as devoutly worship God in the open fields, as if he were in it. *Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice,* Psal. 141. 2. he speaks of such a time when he could not come to offer sacrifice at the Tabernacle.

SECT. III.

3. Faith hath a supporting act after prayer. 1. It supports the soul expect a gracious answer; *I will direct my prayers unto thee, and will look up, Ps. 5. 3.* or I will look; for what, but for a return? an unbelieving heart shoots at random, and never minds where his arrow lights, or what comes of his praying; but faith fills the soul with expectation. As a Merchant when he casts up his estate, he counts what he hath sent beyond Sea, as well as what he hath in hand; so doth faith reckon upon what he hath sent to Heaven in prayer, and not received, as well as those mercies which he hath received, and are in hand at present. Now this expectation which faith raiseth in the soul after prayer appears in the power that it hath to quiet and compose the soul in the interim between the sending forth (as I may say) the ship of prayer, and its return home with its rich lading it goes for; and it is more or less according as faiths strength is; sometimes faith comes from prayer in triumph, and cries *victoria*; it gives such a being and existence to the mercy pray'd for in the Christians soul, before any likelihood of it appears to sense and reason, that the Christian can silence all his troubled thoughts with the expectation of its coming. So *Hannah* pray'd, and was no more sad, *1 Sam. 1. 18.* Yea, it will make the Christian disburse his praises for the mercy long before it is received. Thus high faith wrought in *David*, *Psal. 56. 3, 4.* *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*; and in the next words, *vers. 4.* *In God will I praise his Word*; that is, he would praise God for his promise; before there were any performance of it to him, when it had no existence but in *Gods faithfulness*, and *Davids* faith. This holy man had such a piercing eye of faith, as he could see the promise when he was at lowest ebb of misery, so certain and unquestionable is the power and truth of God, that he could then praise God, as if the promised mercy had been actually fulfilled to him. But I would not have thee, Christian, try the truth of thy faith by this heroick high strain it mounts to in some eminent believers. Thou may'st be a faithful souldier to Christ, though thou attainest not to the degree of a few Worthies in his Army, more honourable in this respect, than the rest of their brethren. There is a lower act of faith, which if thou canst find, may certifie thee of its truth; that (I mean) which though it doth not presently disburthen the soul (upon praying) of all its anxious disquieting thoughts, yet keeps the souls head above the waves, and gives a check to them that they abate, (though by little and little) as the stream in a channel doth at a falling tyde. When God took the *Deluge* from the earth, he did not do it in a moment. It is said *the waters returned from off the earth continually, Gen. 8. 3.* That is, it was falling water from day to day, till all was gone; Canst thou not find, Christian, that some of thy tumultuous disquieting thoughts are let out at the sluice of prayer, and that it is some ease to thy encumbered spirit, that thou hast the bosom of a gracious God to empty thy sorrowful heart into? and though praying doth not drein away all thy fears, yet it keeps

thee, doth it not, from being over-flown with them, which thou could'st not avoid without faith? a soul wholly void of faith, prays, and leaves none of its burthen with God, but carries all back with it that it brought, and more too; calling on God gives no more relief to him, than throwing out an Anchor that hath no hooks to take hold on the firm Earth, doth the sinking ship. If therefore poor soul thou findest upon throwing out thy Anchor of faith in prayer that it takes such hold on Christ in the promise, as to stay thee from being driven by the fury of Satans affrighting temptations, or thy own despairing thoughts, bless God for it. The ship that rides at Anchor is safe (though it may be a little toll'd to and fro) so long as the Anchor keeps its hold. And so art thou poor soul; that faith will save from hell, that will not wholly free the soul here from fears.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, True faith is uniform. As sincere obedience doth not pick and chuse, take this Commandment, and leave that; but hath respect to all the precepts of God; so faith unfeigned, hath respect to all the truths of God. It believes one promise as well as another. As the true Christian must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus with respect of persons, *Jam. 2. 1.* so not with respect to truths. To pretend to believe one promise, and to give no credit to another; this is to be partial in the promises, as the Priests are charg'd to be in the duties of the Law, *Mal. 2. 9.* The honour of God is as deeply engaged to perform one promise as another. Indeed as the breach but of one Commandment would put us under the guilt of the whole; so Gods failing in one promise (which is blasphemy to think) would be the breaking of his whole Covenant; promises are copulative as well as commands; and therefore neither can God keep one, except he perform all; nor we believe one, except we believe all. God hath spoke all these words of promises, as he did of those precepts; his seal is to all, and he looks we should compass all within the embraces of our faith. *David* bears witness to the whole truth of God, *Psal. 119. 160.* *Thy Word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgements endureth for ever.* Try now thy faith here; possibly thou pretendest to believe the promise for pardon, and art often pleasing thy self with the thoughts of it; but what faith hast thou on the promise for sanctifying thy nature, and subduing thy corruptions? may be thou mindest not these, improvest not these; this fruit may hang long enough on the branches of the promises, before thou gatherest it; the other is for thy tooth, not these; whereas true faith would like one as well as the other. See how heartily *David* prays for the performance of this promise, *Psal. 119. 132.* *Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name; order my steps in thy Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.* *David* would not lose any priviledge that God hath by promise settled on his children; do with me, saith he, as thou usest to do. This is more than family fare, what thou promisest to do for all that love thee; and let not me go worse clad than the rest of

of my brethren. May be thou fanciedst thou hast a faith for the eternal salvation of thy soul; but hast thou faith to rely on God for the things of this life? A strange believer is he not, that lives by faith for Heaven, and by his wits and sinful policy for the world? Christ proves that they *John 5. 44.* did not believe on him, because they durst not trust him with their names and credits. If we cannot trust him with the less, how can we in the greater?

I deny not, but he that hath a true faith, yea, a strong faith for Heaven, may be put to a plunge, and his faith foiled about a temporal promise; but we must not from an hour of temptation, (wherein God leaves his eminentest Saints to humble them) judge of the constant ordinary frame of the believers heart. Though *Abraham* dissembled once to save his life, which he thought in some danger for his wives beauty; yet he did at other times give eminent testimony that he trusted God for his temporal life, as well as for his eternal salvation. I do not therefore bid thee question the truth of thy faith, for every fainting fit that comes over it, as to the good things of the promise for this life. A man may in a time of war, have some of his estate lye under the enemies power for a time, and he so long have no profits from it; but still he reckons it as his estate, is troubled for his present great loss, and endeavours as soon as he can, to recover it again out of his enemies hand; so in the hurry of a temptation, when Satan, the souls great enemy, is abroad, and God withdraws his assistance, the believer may have little support from some particular promise; but the believer ever counts that his portion, as well as any other, mourns he can act his faith no more upon it, and labours to reinforce his faith with new strength from Heaven what he can, that he may be able to live upon it, and improve

it more to his comfort, so that still it holds true, if we believe not God for this life, neither do we for the other. In a word, may be thou pretendest to a faith for thy temporals, and seemest to trust God for things of this life; but art a meer stranger to those prime acts of faith, whereby the believing soul closeth with Christ, and receiveth him as his Lord and Saviour, and so seals to the Covenant, that in the Gospel is tendred to poor sinners. Canst thou so far fight against thy own reason, as to think that any temporal promise belongs to thee without these? What gives the woman right to her jointure, but her marriage-covenant? And what gives the creature a true claim to these promises, or any other in the Covenant of grace, but its union to Christ, and accepting of him as he is offered? The first act of Gods love to the creature, is that whereby he chooseth such a one to be his, and sets him apart in his unchangeable purpose, to be an object of his special love in Christ, and therefore called the *foundation*, as that on which God layes the superstructure of all other mercies. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. 2. 19.* First, God chooseth a person to be his, and on this foundation he builds, and bestows all his further cost of mercy upon the creature, as one that is his. So on the creatures part, first faith closeth with Christ, severs him in his thoughts from all others, and chooseth him to be his Saviour, in whom alone he will trust, and whom alone he will serve; which done, then it trades with this promise and that, as the portion which falls to him by marriage with Christ. And therefore see how preposterous thy course is, who snatchest these promises, to thy self, before there hath past any good will from thee to Christ.

CHAP. VII.

An Exhortation to all in a state of unbelief, to endeavour for faith, with one direction toward the attaining of it.

Use 3. IS faith so precious a grace? Let it provoke you, who want it, to get it. Can you hear of this pearl, and not wish it were yours? wherefore hath the Spirit spoken such great and glorious things of faith in the Word, but to make it the more desirable in your eye? Is there any way to get Christ, but by getting faith? or dost not thou think that thou needest Christ as much as any other? there is a generation of men in the world, would almost make one think this was their judgement; who, because their corruptions have not (by breaking out into plague-sores of profaneness) left such a brand of ignominy upon their name, as some others lye under, but their conversations have been strowed with some flowers of morality, whereby their names have kept sweet among their neighbours, therefore they do not at all listen to the offers of Christ, neither do their consciences much check them for this neglect. And why so? surely, it is not because they are more willing to go to hell than others, for they do that to

escape it, which many others will not; but because they think the way they are in, will bring them in good time to Heaven, without any more ado. Poor deluded creatures! Is Christ then sent to help only some more debauched sinners to Heaven, such as Drunkards, Swearers, and of that rank? And are civil, moral men left to walk thither on their own legs? I am sure, if the Word may be believed, we have the case resolved clear enough: That tells but of one way to Heaven for all that mean to come there: As there is but *one God*, so but *one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* And if but one bridge over the gulf, judge what is like to become of the civil righteous man (for all his sweet scented life) if he miss this one bridge, and goes on in the road he hath set out in for Heaven. O remember proud man who thou art, and cease thy vain attempt. Art not thou of *Adam's* seed? hast thou not traitors blood in thy veins? if *every mouth be stopped*, *Rom. 3. 19, 20.* how darest thou open thine? if *all the world become*

become guilty before God, that by the deeds of the Law, no flesh can be justified in his sight; where then shalt thou stand to plead thy innocency before him, who sees thy black skin under thy white feathers, thy foul heart through thy fair carriage? It is faith on Christ, that alone can purifie thy heart, without which thy walk'd face and hands (external righteousness I mean) will never commend thee to God. And therefore thou art under a horrible delusion, if thou dost not think that thou needest Christ, and a faith to interest thee in him as much as the bloodiest murderer, or filthiest Sodomite in the world. If a company of men and children in a journey, were to wade through some brook, not beyond a mans depth, the men would have the advantage of the children; but if to cross the sea, the men would need a ship to waft them over, as well as the children: And they might well pass for mad men, if they should think to wade through, without the help of a ship, that is offer'd them as well as the other; because they are a little taller than the rest are; such a foolish desperate adventure wouldst thou give for thy soul, if thou shouldst think to make thy way through the justice of God to heaven, without shipping thy self by faith in Christ, because thou art not so bad in thy external conversation as others. Let me therefore again and again beseech all that are yet destitute of faith, to endeavour for it, and that speedily. There is nothing deserves the precedence in your thoughts before this. *David resolv'd not to give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob, Psal. 132. 4, 5.* The habitation which pleaseth God most, is thy heart, but it must be a believing heart, Ephes. 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.* O how dare you sleaze a night in that house where God doth not dwell? and he dwells not in thee, if thou carriest an unbelieving heart in thy bosome. There is never a Gospel-Sermon thou hearest, but he stands at thy door to be let in, take heed of multiplying unkindnesses, in denying him entertainment; how knowest thou, but God may, finding thy heart so oft shut by unbelief against his knocks, suddenly seal thee up under final unbelief?

Quest. But possibly thou wilt ask now, how thou maist get this precious grace of faith.

Ans. The answer to this question, take in these following directions.

SECT. I.

First, Labour to get thy heart convinced of, and affected with thy unbelief: Till this be done, thou wilt be but sluggish and slighty in thy endeavours for faith. A man may be convinced of other sins, and never think of coming to Christ. Convince a drunkard of his drunkenness, and upon leaving his drunken trade, his mind is pacified, yea, he blesteth himself in his reformation, because all the quarrel his conscience had with him, was for that particular sin: But, when the Spirit of God convinceth the creature of his unbelief, he gets between him and

those burrows in which he did use to earth and hide himself; he hath no ease in his spirit, from those plaisters now, which formerly have relieved him, and so kept him from coming over to Christ. Before it serv'd the turn to bring his conscience to sleep, when it accused him for such a sin; that he had left the practice of it; and for the neglect of a duty, that now he had taken it up; without any enquiry into his state, whether good or bad, pardoned, or unpardoned (thus many make a shift to daub and patch the peace of their consciences, even as some do, to keep up an old rotten house, by stopping in, here a tyle, and there a stone, till a loud wind comes and blows the whole house down.) But when once the creature hath the load of its unbelief laid upon his spirit, then 'tis little ease to him, to think he is no drunkard as he was, no Atheist in his family, without the worship of God, as he was. Thy present state, saith the Spirit of God, is as damning, in that thou art an unbeliever, as if thou wert these still; yea, what thou wert, thou art, and wilt be found at the great day, to be the drunkard, and Atheist (for all thy seeming reformation) except by an intervening faith, thou gainest a new name; what though thou beest drunk no more, yet the guilt remains upon thee, till faith strikes it off with the blood of Christ. God will be paid his debt by thee, or Christ for thee; and Christ payes no reckoning for unbelievers.

Again, As the guilt remains, so the power of those lusts remain (so long as thou art an unbeliever) however they may disappear in the outward act. Thy heart is not empty'd of one sin, but the vent stoppt by restraining grace: A bottle full of wine, close stoppt, shews no more what it hath in it, than one that is empty; and that is thy case: how is it possible thou shouldst truly mortifie any one lust, that hast no faith, which is the only victory of the world? In a word, if under the convincement of thy unbelief, thou wilt find (how little a sin soever now it is thought by thee) that there is more malignity in it, than in all thy other sins. Hast thou been a lyar? that is a grievous sin indeed; Hell gaps for every one that loveth and telleth a lye, Rev. 22. 15. But know poor wretch, the loudest lye, which ever thou told'st is that, which by thy unbelief thou tellest; here, thou bearest false witness against God himself, and tellest a lye, not to the holy Ghost, as Ananias did, but a lye of the Holy Ghost; as if not a word were true he saith in the promises of the Gospel. If he that believes sets to his seal that God is true; judge you, whether the unbeliever makes him not a lyar? Hast thou been a murderer, yea, had thy hand in the blood of Saints, the best of men? This is a dreadful sin, I confess; But by thy unbelief, thou art a more bloody murderer, by how much the blood of God is more precious than the blood of meer men. Thou killest Christ over again by thy unbelief, and treadest his blood under thy feet, yea, throwest it under Satans feet to be trampled on by him.

SECT. II.

Quest. But how can unbelief be so great a sin, when it is not in the sinners power to believe?

Ans. By this reason the unregenerate person might wipe off any other sin, and shake off the guilt of it, with but saying, It is not my fault that I do not keep this commandment or that, for I have no power of my self to do them. This is true, he cannot perform one holy action holily and acceptably; *They that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8.* But, it is a false inference, that therefore he doth sin, because he can do no other.

First, Because this inability is not created by God, but contracted by the creature himself. *God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions, Eccles. 7. 29.* Man had not his lame hand from God; No, he was made a creature fit and able for any service his Maker would please to employ him in; But man crippled himself; And mans fault cannot prejudice Gods right. Though he hath lost his ability to obey, yet God hath not lost his power to command; who among our selves thinks his debter discharg'd, by wasting that estate whereby he was able to have paid us? 'Tis confessed, had man stood, he should not, indeed could not have believed on Christ for salvation, as now he is held forth in the Gospel; but this was not from any disability in man, but from the unmeetness of such an object to Adam's holy state. If it had been a duty

meet for God to command, there was ability in man to have obeyed.

Secondly, Mans present impotency to yield obedience to the commands of God, and in particular to this of believing (where it is promulged) doth afford him no excuse; because it is not a simple inability; but complicated with an inward enmity against the command. 'Tis true, man cannot believe; but it is as true, man will not believe: *Te will not come unto me, that you might have life, Joh. 5. 40.* It is possible, yea ordinary, that a man may (through some feebleness & deficiency of strength) be disabled to do that which he is very willing to do, and this draws out our pity: such a one was the poor cripple who lay so long at the pool, *Joh. 5. 5.* He was willing enough to have steeped down, if he could have but crept thither; or that any other should have helpt him in, if they would have been so kind: But, what would you think of such a cripple, that can neither go himself into the pool for healing, nor is willing any should help him in, but flies in the face of him that would do him this friendly office? Every unbeliever is this cripple: He is not only impotent himself, but a resister of the Holy Ghost, that comes to wooe and draw him unto Christ. Indeed, every one that believes, believes willingly; But he is beholden, not to nature, but to grace for this willingness: none are willing till the day of power comes, *Psal. 110. 3.* in which the Spirit of God overshadows the soul, and by his incubation (as once upon the waters) he new forms and moulds the will into a sweet compliance with the call of God in the Gospel.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains a second Direction for the obtaining Faith.

Secondly, Take heed of resisting or opposing the Spirit of God, when he offers his help to the work. If ever thou believest, he must enable thee; take heed of opposing him. Master-workmen love not to be controul'd. Now, two wayes the Spirit of God may be opposed. *First,* when the creature waits not on the Spirit, where he ordinarily works faith. *Secondly,* when the creature, though he attends on him in the way of means, yet controuls him in his work.

First, Take heed thou opposest not the Spirit, by not attending on him in the way and means, by which he ordinarily works faith. Thou knowest where Jesus useth to pass, and his Spirit breath; and that is in the great Gospel Ordinance, the Ministry of the Word. Christs sheep ordinarily conceive when they are drinking the water of life here. The hearing of the Gospel, it is called, *Gal. 3. 2. The hearing of faith,* because by hearing the doctrine of faith, the Spirit works the grace of faith in them. This is the still voice he speaks to the souls of sinners in. *Thine eyes shall see thy Teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, Isa. 30. 20.* Here are God and man teach-

ing together. Thou canst not neglect mans teaching, but thou resistest the Spirits also. It was for something that the Apostle placed them so near, *2 Thess. 5. 19.* he bids us, *quench not the Spirit;* and in the next words, *despise not prophesying;* surely he would have us know that the Spirit is dangerously quenched, when prophesying or preaching of the Gospel is despised. Now the most notorious way of despising prophesying or preaching is to turn our back of the Ordinance, and not attend on it. When God sets up the Ministry of the Word in a place, his Spirit then opens his School, and expects that all who would be taught for heaven, should come thither; O take heed of playing the truant, and absenting thy self from the Ordinance, upon any unnecessary occasion, much less of casting off the Ordinance. If he tempts God, that would be kept from sin, and yet will not keep out of the circle of the occasion, that leads to the sin; then he tempts God as much that would have faith, and pretends his desire is, that the Spirit should work it; but will not come within the ordinary walk of the Spirit, where he doth the work; whether is it most fitting, that the Scholar should wait on his

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Master

Master at School to be taught, or that the Master should run after his truant Scholar at play in the field to teach him there, judge you?

2. Take heed that in thy attendance on the Word, thou dost not controul the Spirit in those several steps he takes in thy soul, in order to the production of faith. Though there are no preparatory works of our own to grace; yet the Holy Spirit hath his preparatory works, whereby he disposeth souls to grace. Observe therefore carefully the gradual approaches he makes by the Word to thy soul, for want of complying with him in which he may withdraw in a distaste, and leave the work at a sad stand for a time, if not quite give it over, never more to return to it. We read, *Acts 7. 23.* how it came into the heart of *Moses to visit his Brethren in Egypt* (stirr'd up, no doubt, by God himself to the journey) there he begins to shew his good will to them, and zeal for them in slaying an *Egyptian*, that had wronged an *Israelite*; which though no great matter towards their full deliverance out of *Egypt*, yet he supposed (it is said, *ver. 25.*) *his brethren would have understood* (by that hint) *how that God would by his hand deliver them*; but they did not comply with him, nay, rather opposed him; and therefore he withdrew, and they hear no more of *Moses*, or their deliverance, *for forty years space, ver. 40.* Thus, may be, the Spirit of God gives thee a visit in an Ordinance, directs a word that speaks to thy particular condition; he would have thee understand by this, sinner, how ready he is to help thee out of thy house of bondage, thy state of sin and wrath, if now thou wilt hearken to his counsel, and kindly entertain his motions; Carry thy self rebelliously now against him, and God knows when thou mayest hear of him again knocking at thy door upon such an errand. God makes short work with some in his judiciary proceedings; if he finds a repulse once, sometimes he departs, and leaves a dismal curse behind him as the punishment of it, *Luke 14. 24.* *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my Supper.* They were but once invited, and for their first denial this curse clapt upon their heads. It is not said, they shall never come where the Supper stands on the board, but they shall never taste. Many sit under the Ordinances, where Christ in Gospel-dishes it set forth admirably, but through the efficacy of this curse upon them, never taste of these dainties all their life; they hear precious truths, but their hearts are sealed up in unbelief, and their minds made reprobate and injudicious, that they are not moved at all by them. There is a kind of phrensie and madness (I have heard of) in which a man will discourse soberly and rationally, till you come to speak of some one particular subject that was the occasion of his distemper, and first broke his brain; here he is quite out, and presently loses his Reason, not able to speak with any understanding of it. O how many men and women are there among us, (frequent attenders on the Word) who in any matter of the world, are able to discourse very understandingly, and rationally; but when you come to speak of the things of God, Christ and Heaven, it is strange to see how soon their Reason is lost, and all understanding gone from them;

they are not able to speak of these matters with any judgment! Truly I am afraid, in many (who have sat long under the means, and the Spirit hath been making some attempts on them) this injudiciousness of mind in the things of God, is but the consequence of that spiritual curse, which God hath past upon them, for resisting these essays of his Spirit. I beseech you therefore, beware of opposing the Spirit; Doth he beam any light from his word into thy understanding, whereby thou (who wert before an ignorant Sor) comest to know something of the evil of sin, the excellency of Christ, and canst discourse rationally of the truths of the Scripture? Look now to it, what thou doest with this Candle of the Lord that is lighted in thy mind; take heed thou beest not found sinning with it, or priding thy self in it, lest it goes out in a snuff, and thou, for *rebelling against the light*, comest at last to *dye without knowledge*, as is threatned, *Job 36. 12.* If the Spirit of God goes yet further, and fortifies the light in thy understanding that it sets thy Conscience on fire with the sense of thy sins, and apprehensions of the wrath due to them; Now, take heed of resisting the Holy Spirit, that in mercy to thy soul, kindles this fire in thy bosom, to keep thee out of a worse in Hell, if thou wilt be ruled by him. Thou must expect, that Satan, now his House is on fire over his head, will bestir him what he can, to quench it; thy danger is, lest thou shouldst listen to him for thy present ease. Take heed therefore where thou drawest thy water, with which thou quenchest this fire; that it be out of no Well, but out of the Word of God. In thinking to quiet thy Conscience, thou mayest quench the Spirit of God in thy conscience, which is the mischief, the Devil longs thou shouldst pull upon thy own Head. There is more hope of a lick man, when his disease comes out, than when it lies at the heart, and nothing is seen outwardly; you know how *Hazael* helpt his *Master* to his sad end, who might have lived for all his disease, *2 Kings 8. 15.* *He took a thick cloth, and dipp it in water, and spread it on his face so that he dyed, and it follows, And Hazael reigned in his stead.* Thus the wretch came to the Crown. He saw the King like to recover, and he squatted his disease (in all probability) to his heart by the wet cloth, and so by his death made a way for himself to the Throne. And truly Satan will not much fear to recover the Throne of thy heart (which this present combustion in thy conscience, puts him in great fear of losing) can he but persuade thee to apply some carnal coolings to it, thereby to quench the Spirit in his convincing work. These convictions are sent thee mercifully in order to thy spiritual delivery, and they should be as welcom to thee, as the kindly bearing pains of a Woman in Travail are to her; without them she could not be delivered of her child; nor without these, more or less, can the new creature be brought forth in thy soul.

Again, May be the Spirit of God goes yet further and doth not only dart light into thy mind, Hell fire into thy Conscience, but Heaven fire also into thy affections; my meaning is, He from the word, displays Christ so in his own excellencies, and the fitness of him in all his offices to thy wants, that thy affections

ctions begin to work after him; the frequent discourses of him, and the mercy of God through him to poor sinners, are so luscious, that thou beginnest to taste some sweetness in hearing of them, which stirs up some passionate desires, whereby thou art in hearing the Word often fallying forth in such like breathings as these; O that Christ were mine, shall I ever be the happy soul, whom God will pardon and save? yea, possibly in the heat of thy affections, thou art cursing thy lusts, and Satan, who have held thee so long from Christ, and sudden purposes are taken up by thee, that thou wilt bid adue to thy former wayes, and break through all the entreaties of thy dearest lusts, to come to Christ. O soul, now the Kingdom of God is nigh indeed unto thee. Thou art, (as I may so say) even upon thy quickning, and therefore above all, this is the chief season of thy care, lest thou shouldst miscarry; if these sudden desires did but ripen into a deliberate choice of Christ; and these purposes, settle into a permanent resolution to renounce sin and self, and so thou cast thy self on Christ, I durst be the messenger to joy thee with the birth of this babe of grace (saith I mean) in thy soul. I confess affections are up and down; yea, like the wind, how strongly soever they seem to blow the soul one way at present, are often found in the quite contrary point very soon after. A man may be drunk with passion and affection, as really as with Wine or Beer; And as it is ordinary for a man to make a bargain, when he is in Beer or Wine, which he repents of, as soon as he is sober again; so it is as ordinary for poor creatures, who make choice of Christ and his wayes in a Sermon (while their affections have been elevated above their ordinary pitch, by some moving discourse) to repent of all they have done, a while after, when the impression of the Word (which heated their affections in hearing) be worn off; and

then they come to themselves again, and are what they were, as far from any such desires after Christ, as ever. Content not therefore thy self with some sudden pangs of affection in an Ordinance, but labour to preserve those impressions, which then the Spirit makes on thy soul, that they be not defaced, and rub'd off (like colours newly laid on before they are dry) by the next temptation that comes. This is the Caveat of the *Apostle*, Heb. 2. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, or run out as leaking Vessels.* May be at present, thy heart is melting, and in a flow with sorrow for thy sins, and thou thinkest, surely now I shall never give my lust a kind look more, (indeed one might wonder to see the solemn mournful countenances under a Sermon, which of these could be the man or woman, that would afterwards be seen walking hand in hand with those sins they now weep to hear mentioned.) But, as thou lovest thy life, watch thy soul, lest this prove but as the early dew, none of which is to be seen at Noon. Do thou therefore as those do, who have stood some while in a hot bath, out of which when they come, they do not presently go into the open Aire (that were enough to kill them) but betake themselves to their warm Bed, that they may nourish this kindly heat, and now while their pores are open, by a gentle sweat, breath out more effectually the remaining dregs of their distemper. Thus betake thy self to thy Closet, and there labour to take the advantage of thy present relenting frame for the more free pouring out of thy soul to God, now the Ordinance hath thawed the Tap, and with all thy soul beg of God, he would not leave thee short of faith, and suffer thee to miscarry now he hath thee upon the wheel, but make thee a Vessel unto honour, which follows as the third direction.

CHAP. IX.

Contains three Directions more towards the obtaining Faith.

Thirdly, Lift up thy Cry aloud in Prayer to God for faith.

SECT. I.

Quest. But may an unbeliever pray? some think he ought not.

Ans. This is ill news if it were true, even for some who do believe, but dare not say that they are believers. It were enough to scare them from prayer too; and so, it would be as Satan would have it; that God should have few or none to vouch him in this solemn part of his worship, for they are but the fewest of believers that can walk to the Throne of grace in view of their own faith; Prayer, it is *medium cultus*, and also *medium gratia*. A means whereby we give worship to God, and also wait to receive grace from God; so that to say, a wicked man ought not to pray, is to say, he ought not to worship God, and acknowledge him to be his Maker; And also, that he

ought not to wait on the means whereby he may obtain grace, and receive faith. *Prayer is the souls motion God-ward, saith Reverend Master Baxter; and to say an unbeliever should not pray, is to say he should not turn to God; who yet saith to the wicked, Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Desire is the soul of prayer, (saith the same learned Author) and who dares say to the wicked, Desire not faith, desire not Christ or God? In his right method for peace of Conscience, pag. 63. It cannot indeed be denied, but that an unbeliever sins when he prays; but it is not his praying is his sin, but his praying unbelievingly. And therefore he sins less in praying, than in neglecting to pray; because when he prays, his sin lyes but in the circumstance and manner; but when he doth not pray, then he stands in a total defiance to the duty God hath commanded him to perform, and means God hath appointed him to use for obtaining grace. I must therefore poor soul, bid thee go on for all these Bug-bears, and neglect not*

this grand duty, which lyes upon all the sons and daughters of men; only go in the sense of thy own vileness, and take heed of carrying purposes of going on in sin with thee to the Throne of grace; this were a horrible wickedness indeed. As if a Traytor should put on the Livery which the Princes servants wear, for no other end, but to gain more easie access to his person, that he might stab him with a Dagger he hath under that Cloke. Is it not enough to sin, but wouldst thou make God accessary to his own dishonour also? By this bold enterprize thou dost what lies in thee to do it. Should this be thy temper (which God forbid) if I send thee to pray, it must be with *Peters* counsel to *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. 22. *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* But, I suppose thee (to whom now I am directing my advice) to be of a far different complexion, one brought to some sense of thy deplored state, and so softened by the Word, that thou couldst be content to have Christ upon any terms; only thou art at a loss in thy own thoughts, how such an impotent creature, yea, impudent sinner as thou hast been, should ever come to believe on him. So that 'tis not the love of any present sin in thy heart, but the fear of thy past sins in thy conscience that keeps thee from believing. Now, for thee it is, that I would gather the best encouragements I can out of the Word, and with them, strow thy way to the Throne of grace. Go poor soul to prayer for faith; I do not fear a chiding for sending such customers to Gods door. He that sends us to call sinners home unto him, cannot be angry to hear thee call upon him. He is not so throng'd with such Suitors, as that he can find in his heart to send them away with a denial, that come with this request in their mouths. Christ complains, that sinners *will not come unto him, that they may have life*; and dost think, he will let any complain of him, that they desire to come, and he is unwilling they should? cheer up thy heart poor creature, and knock boldly; thou hast a friend in Gods own bosome, that will procure thy welcome. He that could without any prayer made to him, give Christ for thee, will not be unwilling now thou so earnestly prayest, to give faith unto thee. What thou prayest God to give, he commands thee to do. *This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 Joh. 3. 23. So that in praying for faith, thou prayest that *his Will may be done by thee*; yea, that part of his Will, which above all he desires should be done, called therefore with an Emphasis, *The work of God*, Joh. 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* As if Christ had said, If ye do not this, ye do nothing for God; And surely Christ knew his Fathers mind best; O how welcome must that prayer be to God, which falls in with his chiefeft design! *Joab* found his Request in the mouth of the woman of *Tekoa*, to take as he would have it; how could it do otherwise, when he askt nothing but what the King liked better than himself did, or could? And doth it not please God more (thinkest thou, how strong forever thy desires for faith are) that a poor humbled sinner should believe, than it can do to the creature himself? Me thinks by this time, thou shouldst begin

to promise thy self (poor soul) a happy return of this thy adventure, which thou hast now sent to Heaven. But for thy further encouragement know, that this grace which thou so wantest and makest thy moan to God for; it is a principal part of Christs purchase. That blood, which is the price of pardon, is the price of faith also, by which poor sinners may come to have the benefit of that pardon. As he hath bought off that wrath, which mans sin had justly kindled in Gods heart against him; so he hath also, that enmity which the heart of the creature is filled with against God; and paid for a new stock of grace, wherewith his bankrupt creature may again set up; so that poor soul, when thou goest to pray for faith, look up unto Christ, as having a bank of grace lying by him, to give out to poor sinners who see they have nothing of their own to begin with, and in the sense of this their beggary, repair to him. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Psal. 68. 18. This is beyond all doubt, meane of Christ, and to him applied, *Ephes. 4. 8.* Now observe, *First*, A bank and treasure of gifts in the hand of Christ, *Thou hast*. *Secondly*, Who entrusts him with them, and that is his Father; *Thou hast received gifts*, that is, Christ of his Father. *Thirdly*, When, or upon what considerations, doth the Father deposite this treasure into Christs hands? *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received, &c.* That is, when Christ had vanquish't sin and Satan by his death, and rode in the Triumphant Chariot of his Ascension into Heavens glorious City, then did Christ receive these gifts, as the purchase of his blood, and the payment of an old debt, which God before the foundation of the World (when the Covenant was transacted and struck) promised his Son, upon the condition of his discharging sinful mans debt, with the effusion of his own precious blood unto death. *Fourthly*, The persons for whose use Christ received these gifts; *for men, not Angels, for rebellious men, not men without sin*; so that poor soul, thy sinful nature and life do not make thee an excepted person, and shut thee out from receiving any of this dole. *Lastly*, Observe the nature of these gifts, and the end they are given Christ for; *That God may dwell in them, or with them*; Now nothing but faith can make a soul (that hath been rebellious) a place meet for the holy God to dwell in. This is the gift indeed he received all other gifts for, in a manner; wherefore the gifts of the Spirit and Ministry, *Apostles, Teachers, Pastors, &c.* but that by these he might work faith in the hearts of poor sinners? Let this give thee boldness (poor soul) humbly to press God for that which Christ hath paid for; say, Lord, I have been a rebellious wretch indeed, but did Christ receive nothing for such? I have an unbelieving heart, but I hear there is faith paid for in thy Covenant; Christ shed his blood, that thou mightest shed forth thy spirit on poor sinners. Dost thou think, that while thou art thus pleading with God, and using Christs Name in prayer to move him, that Christ himself can sit within hearing of all this, and not be-friend thy motion to his Father? surely he is willing, that what God is indebted

indebted to him, should be paid; and therefore when thou beggest faith upon the account of his death, thou shalt find him ready to joyn issue with thee in the same prayer to his Father. Indeed he went to Heaven on purpose, that poor returning souls might not want a friend at Court, when they come with their humble petitions thither.

an Intercessor.

SECT. II.

Fourthly, Converſe much with the promiſes, and be frequently pondering them in thy muſing thoughts. It is indeed the Spirits work, and only his, to bottom thy ſoul upon the promiſe, and give his Word a being by faith in thy heart; this thou canſt not do; yet as fire came down from heaven upon *Elijah's* ſacrifice, when he had laid the wood in order, and gone as far as he could; ſo thou mayeſt comfortably hope that then the Spirit of God will come with ſpiritual light and life, to quicken the promiſe upon thy heart, when thou haſt been conſcionably diligent in meditating on the promiſe; if withal thou own'eſt God in the thing, as he did, who when he had laid all in order, lifts up his heart to God in prayer, expecting all from him, *1 King. 18. 36.* I know no more ſpeedy way to invite the Spirit of God in to our aſſiſtance than this. As he tempts the Devil, to tempt him, that lets his eyes gaze, or his thoughts gad upon a luſtful object; ſo he beſpeaks the holy Spirits company, that lets out his thoughts upon holy heavenly objects. We need not doubt but the Spirit of God is as willing to cheriſh any good motion, as the infernal ſpirit is to nourish that which is evil. We find the *Spouſe* ſitting under the ſhadow of her beloved, as one under an Apple-tree, *Cant. 2. 3.* and preſently ſhe tells us, *his fruit was ſweet to her taſte.* What doth this her ſitting under his ſhadow better ſignifie, than a ſoul ſitting under the thoughts of Chriſt, and the precious promiſes that grow out of him, as branches out of a Tree? Do but (O Chriſtian) place thy ſelf here a while, and it were ſtrange if the Spirit ſhould not ſhake ſome fruit from one branch or another into thy lap. Thou knoweſt not, but as *Iſaac* met his bride when he went into the fields to meditate, ſo thou mayeſt meet thy beloved, while walking by thy meditations in this garden of the promiſes.

SECT. III.

5. Laſtly, preſs and urge thy ſoul home with that ſtrong obligation that lyes upon thee, a poor humbled ſinner to believe: poſſibly God hath ſhamed thee in the ſight of thy own conſcience for other ſins, that thou loatheſt the very thought of them, and diſt as well run thy head into the fire, as allow thy ſelf in them; if thou ſhouldeſt wrong thy neighbour in his perſon, name or eſtate, it would kindle a fire in thy conſcience, and make thee afraid to look within doors, (converſe I mean with thy own thoughts) till thou haſt repented of it; and is faith the only indifferent thing, a buſineſs left to thy own choice, whether thou wilt be ſo good to thy ſelf, as to believe, or no? truly the tenderneſs

of conſcience which many humbled ſinners expreſs in trembling at, and ſmiting them for other ſins, compared with the little lenſe they expreſs for this of unbelief, ſpeaks as if they thought they offended God in them, and only wronged themſelves by this their unbelief. O how greatly art thou deceived and abuſed in thy own thoughts, if theſe be thy apprehenſions? yea, if thou doſt not think thou diſhonoureſt God, and offendeſt him in a more tranſcendent manner by thy unbelief, than by all thy other ſins. What *Bernard* ſaith of a hard heart, I may ſay of an unbelieving heart; *Illud cor vere durum, quod non trepidat ad nomen cordis duri.* That is a hard heart indeed, (ſaith he) that trembles not at the name of a hard heart; and that an unbelieving heart indeed, that trembles not at the name of an unbelieving heart; call thy ſelf, O man, to the bar, and hear what thy ſoul hath to ſay for its not cloſing with Chriſt, and thou ſhalt then ſee what an unreaſonable reaſon it will give. It muſt be either becauſe thou likeſt not the terms, or elſe becauſe thou feareſt they are too good ever to be performed. Is the firſt of theſe thy reaſon, becauſe thou likeſt not the terms on which Chriſt is offer'd? poſſibly mighteſt thou but have had Chriſt and thy luſts with him, thou wouldeſt have been better pleaſed; but to part with thy luſts to gain a Chriſt, this thou thinkeſt is a hard ſaying. 'Tis ſtrange this ſhould offend thee, which God could not have left out, and truly have loved us. Thou art a ſot, a Devil, if thou doſt not think thy ſins the worſt piece of thy miſery. O what is Chriſt worth in thy thoughts, if thou dareſt not truſt him to recompence the loſs of a baſe luſt? That man values gold little, who thinks he ſhall pay too dear for it by throwing the dirt or dung out of his hands (with which they are full) to receive it. Well ſinner, the terms for having Chriſt (it ſeems) content thee not; ask then thy ſoul how the terms on which thou holdeſt thy luſts like thee; canſt thou (thinkeſt thou) better ſpare the bliſſful preſence of God and Chriſt in Hell, where thy luſts (if thou holdeſt of this mind) are ſure enough to leave thee at laſt, than the company of thy luſts in Heaven, whether faith in Chriſt would as certainly bring thee. Then take thy choice, and leave it for thy work in Hell to repent of thy folly. But I ſhould think if thou wouldeſt be ſo faithful to thy ſelf, as to ſtate the caſe right, and then ſeriouſly acquaint thy ſoul with it, giving it time and leiſure to dwell upon it daily, that thou wouldeſt ſoon come to have better thoughts of Chriſt and worſe of thy ſins. But may be this is not the reaſon that keeps thee from believing; the terms thou likeſt highly, but it cannot enter into thy heart to think that ever ſuch great things as are promiſed, ſhould be performed to ſuch a one as thou art. Well, of the two, it is better the rub in thy way to Chriſt ſhould lye in the difficulty that thy underſtanding finds to conceive, than in the obſtinacy of thy will not to receive what God in Chriſt offers; but this muſt be removed alſo. And therefore fall to work with thy ſoul, and labour to bring it to reaſon in this particular; for indeed nothing can be more irrational, than to object againſt the reality and certainty of Gods promiſes. Two things well wrought

on thy soul, would satisfie thy doubts, and scatter thy fears as to this.

✓ *First*, Labour to get a right notion of God in thy understanding, and it will not appear strange at all that a great God should do so great things for poor sinners; if a beggar should promise you a thousand pounds a year, you might indeed slight it, and ask where he should have it? but if a Prince should promise more, you would listen after it, because he hath an estate that bears proportion to his promise. God is not engaged for more by promise, than infinite mercy, power and faithfulness can see discharged.

✓ *Be still, and know that I am God, Pſal. 46. 10.* of this *Pſalm* Luther would say in times of great confusion in the Church, *Let us sing the six and fortieth Pſalm, in ſight of the Devil and all his instruments.* And this clause of it, poor humbled soul, thou may'st

sing with comfort in spight of Satan and sin also. *Be still O my soul, and know that he who offers thee mercy, he is God; they that know his Name will trust in him.*

Secondly, Peruse well the securities which this great God gives for the performance of his promise to the believer, and thou shalt find them so many and great, (though his bare word deserves to be taken for more than our souls are worth) that if we had the most slippery cheating companion in the world under such bonds for the paying of a sum of money, we should think it were sure enough; and wilt thou not rest satisfied, when the true and faithful God puts himself under these for thy security, whose truth is so immutable, that it is more possible for light to send forth darkness, than it is that a lye should come out of his blessed lips?

CHAP. X.

An Exhortation to Believers, above all to look to their faith, with some directions for the preserving it.

I Now turn my self to you that are believers, in a double Exhortation.

First, seeing faith is such a choice grace, be stirred up to a more than ordinary care to preserve faith. Keep that, and it will keep thee, and all thy other graces. Thou standest by faith; if that fails, thou fallest; where shall we find thee then but under thy enemies feet? be sensible of any danger thy faith is in; like that *Grecian Captain*, who being knock't down in fight, ask't as soon as he came to himself, where his shield was. This he was solicitous for above any thing else. O be asking in this temptation, and that duty, where is thy faith, and how it fares? this is the grace which God would have us chiefly judge and value our selves by, because there is the least danger of priding in this self-emptying grace of any other, Rom. 12. 3. *I say through the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

Roma There were many gifts which the *Galatians* received from God, but he would have them think of themselves rather by their faith; and the reason is, that they may think *soberly*. Indeed all other graces are to be tried by our faith; if they be not fruits of faith, they are of no true worth. This is the difference between a Christian and an honest Heathen. He values himself by his patience, temperance, liberality, and other moral virtues which he hath to shew above others; these he expects will commend him to God, and procure him a happiness after death; and in these he glories, and makes his boast while he lives. But the Christian he is kept sober in the sight of these, (though they commence graces in him, that were but virtues in the Heathen) because he hath a discovery of Christ, whose righteousness and holiness by faith becomes his; and he values himself by these, more than what is inherent in him. I cannot better illustrate this,

than by two men; the one a *Courtier*, the other a *Countrey-man*, and a stranger to Court; both having fair estates, but the Courtier greatest by far. Ask the *Countrey-Gentleman* that hath no relation to Court, or place in the Princes favour, what he is worth, and he'll tell you as much as his lands and moneys amount to; these he values himself by: but ask the Courtier what he is worth; and he (though he hath more land and money by far than the other) will tell you he values himself by the favour of his Prince, more than by all his other estate. I can speak a big word (saith he) what my Prince hath is mine, (except his Crown and Royalty) his purse mine to maintain me, his love to embrace me, his power to defend me. The poor Heathens being strangers to God, and his favour in Christ, they blest themselves in the improvement of their natural stock, and that treasure of moral virtues which they had gathered together with their industry, and the restraint that was laid upon their corruptions by a secret hand, they were not aware of. But the believer having access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands so high in Court-favour with God by Jesus Christ, he doth and ought to value himself chiefly by his faith, rather than any other grace. Though none can shew these graces in their true heavenly beauty besides himself, yet they are not these, but Christ (who is his by faith) that he blesteth himself in. The believer can say through mercy, that he hath a heart beautified with those heavenly graces, to which the Heathens mock-virtues, and the proud self-Justiciary his mock-graces also, are no more to be compared, than the image in the glass is to the face, or the shadow to the man himself. He can say, he hath that holiness in truth, which they have but in shew and semblance. And this grace of God in him, he values infinitely above all the worlds treasure or pleasure; he had rather be the ragged Saint, than robed sinner; yea, above his natural life, which he can be willing to lose, and count himself

himself no loser; may he thereby but secure this his spiritual life. But this is not the biggest word that a believer can say; he is not only partaker of the divine nature by that principle of holiness infused to him, but he is heir to all the holiness, yea, all the glorious perfections that are in God himself. All that God is, hath or doth, he hath leave to call his own. God is pleased to be called his peoples God. *The God of Israel*, 2 Sam. 23. 3. As a mans house and land bears the owners name upon it; so God is graciously pleased to carry his peoples name on him that all the world may know who are they he belongs to. *Naboth's field* is called *the portion of Naboth*, 2 Kings 9. 21. so God is called *the portion of Jacob*, Jer. 10. 16. Nothing hath God kept from his people (saving his Crown and glory; that indeed he will not give to another, Isa. 42. 8.) if the Christian wants strength, God would have him make use of his: and that he may do it boldly and confidently the Lord calls himself his peoples strength, 1 Sam. 15. 29. *The strength of Israel will not lie*. Is it righteousness and holiness he is scantied in? behold where it is brought unto his hand; *Christ is made unto us righteousness*, 1 Cor. 1. 13. called therefore *the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. 33. 16. is it love and mercy they would have? All the mercy in God is at their service, Psal. 31. 19. *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* Mark the phrase, *laid up for them*; his mercy and goodness it is intended for them; as a father that layes by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, this is a portion for such a child. But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title unto all this. That which maketh him a child, makes him an heir. Now faith makes him a child of God, Joh. 1. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on him*. As therefore you would not call your birth-right into question, and bring your interest in Christ, and those glorious priviledges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your souls, look to your faith.

Quest. But what counsel (may the Christian say) can you give for the preserving of my faith?

Ans. To this I answer in these following particulars.

First, That which was instrumental to beget thy faith, will be helpful to preserve thy faith. I mean the word of God. As it was seed for the former purpose in thy conversion, so now it is milk for the present sustentation of thy faith; lye sucking at this breast, and that often. Children cannot suck long, nor digest much at a time, and therefore need the more frequent returns of their meals; such children are all believers in this world; *Precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little*. The breast often drawn out for the nourishing of them up in their spiritual life, or else they cannot subsist. It was not ordinary that *Moses* should look so well as he did, after he had fasted so long, *Exod. 34*. And truly it is a miraculous faith they must have, who will undertake to keep their faith alive, with-

out taking any spiritual repast from the Word. I have heard of some children that have been taken from their mothers breast as soon almost as born, and brought up by hand, who yet have done well for their natural life; but I shall not believe that a creature can thrive in his spiritual life, who casts off Ordinances, and weans himself from the word, till I hear of some other way of provision, that God hath made for the ordinary maintenance of it besides this; and I despair of living so long as to see this proved. I know some (that we may hope well of) have been for a time perswaded to turn their backs on the Word and Ordinances; but they have return'd well hunger-bit to their old fare again; yea with *Naomi* her bitter complaint in their mouths, *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty*, Ruth 1. 21. And happy for them that they are come to their stomachs in this life, before this food be taken off the table, never more to be set on. He that taught Christians to pray for their daily bread, did suppose they had need of it; and surely he did not mean only or chiefly corporal bread, who in the same Chapter bids them *seek first the Kingdom of God*, Matt. 6. 33. Well Christian, prize thou the Word, feed favourly on the Word, whether it be dish'd forth in a Sermon at the publick; or in a conference with some Christian friend in private, or in a more secret duty of reading and meditation by thy solitary self. Let none of these be disused or carnally used by thee; and with Gods blessing thou shalt reap the benefit of it in thy faith, when thy stomach fails to the Word, thy faith must needs begin to fail on the Word. O that Christians, who are so much in complaints of their weak faith, would but turn their complaints into enquiries, why it is so weak and declining? It is not because faith hath mist its wonted meals from the Word? Thou haply hast formerly broke through many straits to keep thy acquaintance with God in his Word, and wert well paid for that time which thou didst borrow of thy other occasions for this end, by that sweet temper then thou foundest thy heart in, to trust God, and rely upon him in all conditions; but now since thou hast discontinued thy acquaintance with God in those his Ordinances, thou perceivest a sad change; where thou couldst have trusted God, now thou art suspicious of him; those promises that were able in a mutiny and hubbub of thy unruly passions to have hush'd and quieted all in thy soul at their appearing in thy thoughts, have now alas but little authority over thy murmuring unbelieving heart, to keep it in any tolerable order; if it be thus with thee poor soul, thy case is sad, and I cannot give thee better counsel for thy soul, than that which Physicians give men in a consumption, for their bodies. They ask them where they were born and bred up; and to that their native air they send them, as best means to recover them. Thus soul let me ask thee, if thou ever hadst faith, where was it born and bred up? was it not in the sweet Air of ordinances, hearing, meditating, conferring of the word, and praying over the Word? Go, poor creature, and get thee as fast as thou canst into thy native Air, where thou didst draw thy first Christian breath, and where

where thy faith did so thrive and grow for a time. No means more hopeful to set thy feeble faith on its legs again, than this.

2. Wouldst thou preserve thy faith, look to thy Conscience. A good conscience is the bottom faith fails in; if the conscience be wrackt, how can it be thought that faith should be safe? If faith be the Jewel, a good conscience is the Cabinet, in which it is kept: And if the Cabinet be broken, the Jewel must needs be in danger of losing. Now you know, what sins waste the conscience; sins either deliberately committed, or impenitently continued in.

O take heed of deliberate sins, like a stone thrown into a clear stream, they will so royle thy soul, and muddy it, that thou, who even now couldst see thy interest in the promise, wilt now be at a loss, and not know what to think of thy self. They are like a fire on the top of the house, it will be no easie matter to quench it. But if thou hast been so unhappy, as to fall into such a slough, take heed of lying in it by impenitency; the sheep may fall into a ditch, but it is the swine that wallows in it, and therefore, how hard wilt thou find it (thinkst thou) to act thy faith on the promise, when thou art by thy filthy garments, and besmeared countenance, so unlike one of Gods Holy ones? It is dangerous to drink poyson, but far more, to let it lie in the body long. Thou canst not act thy faith (though a believer) on the promise, so as to apply the pardon it presents to thy soul, till thou hast renewed thy Repentance.

3. Exercise thy faith, if thou meanest to preserve thy faith. We live by faith, and faith lives by exercise. As we say of some stirring men; they are never well, but at work; confine them to their bed or chair, and you kill them; so here, hinder faith from working, and you are enemies to the very life and being of it. Why do we act faith so little in prayer, but because we are no more frequent in it? Let the child seldom see its father or mother, and when he comes into their presence, he will not make much after them. Why are we no more able to live on a promise when at a plunge? surely, because we live no more with the promise. The more we converse with the promise, the more confidence we shall put in it. We do not trust strangers, as we do our Neighbours, in whose company we are almost every day. It were a rare way to secure our faith, yea, to advance it, and all our other graces, would we in our daily course, labour to do all our actions, as in obedience to the command, so in faith on the promise. But alas, how many enterprizes are undertaken, where faith is not called in, nor the promise consulted with from one end of the business to the other? And therefore, when we would make use of faith in some particular strait, wherein we think our selves to be more than ordinary at a loss, our faith it self is at a loss and to seek, like a servant, who, because his master very seldom employes him, makes bold to be gadding abroad, and so when his Master doth call him upon some extraordinary occasion, he is out of the way, and not to be found. O Christian, take heed of letting your faith be long out of work; if you do not use it when you ought, it may fail you, when you desire most to act it.

Fourthly, Take special notice of that unbelief which yet remains in thee, and as it is putting forth daily its head in thy Christian course, be sure thou loadest thy soul with the sense of it, and deeply humblest thy self before God for it. What thy faith loseth by every act of unbelief, it recovers again by renewing thy repentance. Davids faith was on the mending hand, when he could shame himself heartily for his unbelief, *Psal. 73. 22.* He confesseth how foolish and ignorant he was; yea, faith he, *I was a beast before thee*; so irrational and brutish his unbelieving thoughts now appeared to him. And by this ingenuous humble confession, the malignity of his distemper breaths out, that he is presently in his old temper again, and his faith is able to act as high as ever. *Thou hast holden me by my right hand, Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after receive me to glory,* ver. 23, 24. But, so long, thy unbelief is sure to grow upon thee, as thou beest unhumbled for it. We have the reason why the people of Laish were so bad, *Judges 18. 7.* *There was no Magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in any thing.* Christian thou halt a Magistrate in thy bosom commissioned by God himself, to check, reprove and shame thee, when thou sinnest: Indeed all things go to wrack in that soul, where this doth not office; hear therefore what this hath to charge thee with, that thou mayest be ashamed; There is no sin dishonours God more than unbelief, and this Sword cuts his Name deepest, when in the hand of a Saint. O, to be wounded in the house of his friends, this goes near the tender heart of God. And there is Reason enough, why God should take this sin so unkindly at a Saints hand, if we consider the near Relation such a one stands in to God. It would grieve an indulgent father, to see his own child come into court, and there bear witness against him, and charge him of some untruth in his words, more than if a stranger should do it; Because, the testimony of a child, though when it is for the vindication of a Parent may lose some credit in the opinion of those that hear it, upon the suspicion of partiality: yet when against a Parent, it seems to carry some more probability of truth, than what another that is a stranger says against him; Because the band of natural affection with which the child is bound to his parent, is so sacred, that it will not be easily suspected; he can offer violence to it, but upon the more inviolable necessity of bearing witness to the truth. O think of this (Christian) again and again; by thy unbelief thou bearest false witness against God; And if thou, a child of God speakest no better of thy heavenly Father, and presentest him in no fairer character to the World; it will be no wonder if they be confirm'd in their hard thoughts of God, even to final impenitency and unbelief, when they shall see how little credit he finds with thee, for all thy great profession of him, and near Relation to him. When we would sink the Reputation of a man, the lowest possible, we cannot think of an expression, that will do it more effectually, than to say, He is such a one, as those that are nearest to him, even his own children dare not trust him, or will not give him a good word. O Christian, ask thy self, whether thou couldst be willing to be the

the unhappy instrument to defame God, and take away his good name in the World; certainly thy heart trembles at the thought of it, if a Saint; and if it doth, then surely thy unbelief, by which thou hast done this so oft, will wound thee to the very heart; and bleeding for what thou hast done, thou wilt beware of taking that Sword into thy hand again, with which thou hast given so many a wound to the Name of God, and thy own peace.

Fifthly, If thou wouldst preserve thy faith, labour to encrease thy faith. None in more danger of losing what they have, than those poor-spirited men, who are content with what they have. A spark is sooner smothered than a flame; a drop easilier drunk up and dried, than a River. The stronger thy faith is, the safer thy faith is from the enemies assaults. The intelligence which an enemy hath of a Castle, being weakly provided for a siege, is enough to bring him against it, which else should not have been troubled with his company. The Devil is a coward, and he loves to fight on the greatest advantage, and greater he cannot have, than the weakness of the Christians faith; didst thou but know (Christian) the many priviledges of a strong faith above a weak, thou wouldst never rest till thou hadst it. Strong faith comes Conquerour out of those temptations, where weak faith is foyled and taken prisoner. Those *Philistims* could not stand before *Sampson* in his strength, who durst dance about him scornfully in his weakness. When *David's* faith was up, how undauntedly did he look death in the face? *1 Sam. 30. 6.* But, when that was out of his heart, O how poor-spirited is he? ready to run his head into every hole, though never so dishonourably, to save himself? *1 Sam. 21. 13.* Strong faith, it frees the Christian from those heart-rending thoughts, which weak faith must needs be oppressd with. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, Esay 26. 3.* So much inward peace and quietness. If little faith, then little peace and serenity, through the storms that our unbelieving fears will necessarily gather. If strong faith, then strong peace, for so the ingemination in the *Hebr. Peace, peace*, imports. 'Tis confessd, weak faith hath as much peace with God through Christ, as the other hath by his strong faith, but not so much besome peace. Weak faith will as surely land the Christian in Heaven as strong faith; for it is impossible the least drachm of true grace should perish, being all incorruptible seed; But the weak doubting Christian is not like to have so pleasant a voyage thither, as another with strong faith. Though all in the ship come safe to shoar, yet he that is all the way Sea-sick, hath not so comfortable a voyage, as he that is strong and healthful. There are many delightful prospects occur in a journey, which he that is sick and weak loseth the pleasure of; but the strong man views all with abundance of delight; and, though he wisheth with all his heart he were at home, yet the entertainment he hath from these, do much shorten and sweeten his way to him. Thus Christian, there are many preivious delights, which Saints travelling to Heaven meet on their way thither (besides what God hath for them at their journeys end.) But, it

is the Christian, whose faith is strong and active on the promise, that finds them. This is he, who sees those spiritual glories in the promise, that ravish his soul with unspeakable delight, while the doubting Christians eye of faith, is so gumm'd up with unbelieving fears, that he can see little to affect him in it. This is he, that goes singing all the way with the promise in his eye; while the weak Christian (kept in continual pain with his own doubts and jealousies) goes sighing and mourning with an heavy heart, because his interest in the promise is yet under a dispute in his own thoughts. As you would not therefore live uncomfortably, and have a dull melancholy walk of it to Heaven, labour to strengthen your faith.

Quest. But, may be, you will ask, how may I know whether my faith be strong or weak?

Ans. I answer, by these following characters.

* First, The more entirely the Christian can rely on God, upon his naked word in the promise, the stronger his faith is. He surely putteth greater confidence in a man, that will take his own word, or single bond for a summ of money, than he, who dares not, except some others will be bound for him. When we trust God for his bare promise, we trust him on his own credit, and this is faith indeed. He that walks without staff or crutch, is stronger than he that needs these to lean on. The promise is the ground faith goes on; sense and reason, these are the crutches which weak faith leans on too much in its acting. Now soul, enquire, *First*, Canst thou bear up thy self on the promise, though the crutch of sense and present feeling be not at hand? May be thou hast had some discoveries of Gods love, and beamings forth of his favour upon thee, and so long as the Sun shined thus in at thy window, thy heart was lightsome, and thou thoughtst thou shouldst never distrust God more, or listen to thy unbelieving thoughts more; but how findest thou thy heart now, since those sensible demonstrations are withdrawn, and may be some frowning Providence sent in the room of them? dost thou presently dispute the promise in thy thoughts, as, not knowing whether thou maist venture to cast Anchor on it or no? Because thou hast lost the sense of his love, does thy eye of faith fail thee also, that thou hast lost the sight of his mercy and truth in the promise? surely the eye of faith is weak, or else it would read the promise without these spectacles. The little child indeed thinks the mother is quite lost, if she goes but out of the room where he is; but as it grows older, so he will be wiser, and truly so will the Believer also. Christian, bleis God for the experiences and sensible tastes thou hast at any time of his love; but know, that we cannot judge of our faith, whether weak or strong by them. Experiences (faith *Parisienfu*) are like Crutches, which do indeed help a lame man to go, but they do not make the lame man found or strong, food and physick must do that. And therefore Christian, labour to lean more on the promise, and less on sensible expressions of Gods love, whether it be in the present feeling, or past experiences of it. I would not take you off

from improving these, but leaning on these, and limiting the actings of our faith to these. A strong man, though he doth not lean on his staff all the way he goes, as the lame man doth on his Crutch (which bears his whole weight) yet he may make good use of it now and then, to defend himself, when set upon by a thief or dog in his way. Thus the strong Christian may make good use of his experiences, in some temptations, though he doth not lay the weight of his faith upon them, but the promise. Canst thou, *Secondly*, Bear thy self upon the promise, when the other Crutch of Reason breaks under thee, or does thy faith even fall to the ground with it? That is a strong faith indeed, that can trample upon the improbabilities and impossibilities, which Reason would be objecting against the performance of the promise, and gives credit to the truth of it with a *non obstat*. Thus Noah fell hard to work about the Ark, upon the credit he gave both to the threatening and promissory part of Gods Word, and never troubled his head to clear the matter to his Reason, how these strange things could come to pass. And it is imputed to the strength of Abraham's faith, that he would not suffer his own narrow Reason to have the hearing of the business, when God promised him a *Michaemas spring* (as I may so say) a son in his old age, Rom. 4. 19. *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, that was now dead;* and skilful swimmers are not afraid to go above their depth, whereas young learners feel for the ground, and are loth to go far from the bank-side. Strong faith fears not, when God carries the creature beyond the depth of his Reason: *We know not what to do, (saith good Jehoshaphat) but our eyes are upon thee,* 2 Chron. 20. As if he had said, we are in a Sea of troubles, beyond our own help, or any thought, how can we wind out of these straits, but our eyes are upon thee, we dare not give our ease for desperate, so long as there is strength in thine arm, tenderness in thy bowels, and truth in thy promise. Whereas weak faith, that is groping for some footing for Reason to stand on, it is taken up, how to reconcile the promise and the creatures understanding; hence those many questions which drop from its mouth. When Christ said, *Give ye them to eat*, Mar. 6. His Disciples ask him, *Shall we go and buy two hundred penninworth of bread?* As if Christs bare Word could not spare that cost and trouble. *Whereby shall I know this (saith Zacharias to the Angel) for I am an old man?* Luke. 1. Alas, his faith was not strong enough to digest, at present, this strange news.

Secondly, The more composed and contented the heart is under the changes, which Providence brings upon the Christians state and condition in the world, the stronger his faith is; weak bodies cannot bear change of weather, so well as healthful and strong do; hot and cold, fair or foul, cause no great alteration in the strong mans temper; but alas, the other is laid up by them, or at best, goes complaining of them. Thus strong faith can live in any Climate, travel in all weather, and sadge with any condition. *I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,* saith Paul, Phil. 4. 11. Alas, all Christs

Scholars are not of Paul's form; weak faith hath not yet got the mastery of this hard lesson. When God turns thy health into sickness, thy abundance into penury, thy honour into scorn and contempt, in what language dost thou now make thy condition known to God? Is thy spirit imbittered into discontent, which thou ventest in murmuring complaints? or art thou well satisfied with Gods dealings, so as to acquiesce cheerfully in thy present portion, not from any unsensibleness of the affliction, but approbation of divine appointment? if the latter, thy faith is strong. *First*, It shews God hath a Throne in thy heart; thou reverencest his Authority, and ownest his Sovereignty, or else thou wouldst not acquiesce in his orders. *I was dumb because thou didst it*, Psal. 39. 9. If the blow had come from any other hand, he could not have taken it so silently. When the servant strikes the child, he runs to his father, and makes his complaint; but though the father doth more to him, he complains not of his father, nor seeks redress from any other; because it is his father, whose authority he reveres. Thus, thou comportest thy self toward God, and what, but a strong faith, can enable thee? *Be still, and know that I am God*, Psal. 46. 11. We must know God believably, to be what he is, before our hearts will be still. *Secondly*, This acquiescency of spirit, under the disposition of Providence, shews that thou dost not only stand in awe of his sovereignty, but hast amiable comfortable thoughts of his mercy and goodness in Christ. Thou believest he can soon, and will certainly make thee amends, or else thou couldst not so easily part with these enjoyments. The child goes willingly to bed, when others may be, are going to supper at a great feast in the family; but the mother promiseth the child, to save something for him against the morning, this the child believes, and is content. Surely, thou hast something in the eye of thy faith, which will recompence all thy present loss, and this makes thee fast so willingly, when others feast, be sick, when others are well. Paul tells us, why he and his Brethren in affliction did not faint, 2 Cor. 14. 16. They saw Heaven coming to them, while Earth was going from them. *For which cause we faint not, — for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Thirdly, The more able to wait long for answers to our desires and prayers, the stronger faith is. It shews the Trades-man to be poor and needy, when he must have ready money for what he sells. They that are fore-handed, are willing to give time, and able to forbear long. Weak faith is all for the present; if it hath not presently its desires answer'd, then it grows jealous, layes down sad conclusions against it self, his prayer was not heard, or he is not one God loves, and the like; much ado to be kept out of a fainting fit. *I said in my haste, all men are liars;* but strong faith, that can trade with God for time, yea, wait Gods leisure, *He that believes makes not haste*, Isa. 28. 16. He knows his money is in a good hand, and he is not over-quick to call for it home, knowing well, that the longest voyages

voyages have the richest returns. As rich luffy ground can forbear rain longer, than lean or sandy, which must have a shower ever and anon, or the corn on it fades; or as a strong healthful man, can fast longer without faintness, than the sickly and weak: so the Christian of strong faith, can stay longer for spiritual refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in the returns of his mercy, and discoveries of his love to him, than one of weak faith.

Fourthly, The more the Christian can lose or suffer upon the credit of the promise, the stronger his faith is: if you should see a man part with a fair inheritance, and leave his kindred and country, where he might pass his days in the embracements of his dear friends, and the delicious fare, which a plentiful estate would afford him every day, to follow a friend to the other end of the world, with hunger and hardship, through Sea and Land, and a thousand perils that meet him on every hand, you would say, what this man had a strong confidence of his friend, and a dear love to him, would you not? Nay, if he should do all this for a friend, whom he never saw, upon the bare credit of a letter, which he sends to invite him to come over to him, with a promise of great things that he will do for him; now to throw all his present possessions and enjoyments at his heels, and willingly put himself into the condition of a poor Pilgrim and Traveller (with the loss of all he hath) that he may come to his dear friend, this adds to the wonder of his confidence. Such gallant spirits we read of, 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8. *Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, &c.* observe the place, and you shall find them in sorrowful plight, *in heaviness through manifold temptations*; yet, because their way lies through the sloughs, to the enjoyment of God and Christ (whom they never saw or knew, but by the report the word makes of them) they can turn their back of the world's friendship and enjoyments, with which it courted them as well as others, and go with a merry heart through the deepest of them all; here is glorious faith indeed. It is not praising of Heaven, and wishing we were there, but a cheerful abandoning the dearest pleasures, and embracing the greatest sufferings of the world (when called to the same) will evidence our faith to be both true and strong.

Fifthly, the more easily that the Christian can repel motions, and resist temptations to sin, the stronger is his faith. The snare or net which holds the little fish fast, the greater and stronger fish easily breaks through. The Christians faith is strong or weak, as he finds it easie or hard to break from temptations to sin; when an ordinary temptation holds thee by the heel, and thou art entangled in it, like a flie in the spiders web; much ado to get off, and persuade thy heart from yielding: truly it speaks faith very feeble: to have no strength to oppose the assaults of sin and lust, speaks the heart void of faith; where faith hath not a hand to prostrate an enemy, it yet hath a hand to lift up against it, and a voice to cry out for help to heaven; some way or other faith will shew its dislike, and enter its protest against sin; And to have little strength to resist, evidenceth a weak faith. *Peters* faith was weak, when a maids voice dasht him out of

countenance, but it was well amended, when he could withstand, and with a noble constancy disdain the threats of a whole council, *Acts 14. 17.* Christian, compare thy self with thy self, and give righteous judgement on thy self: Do now thy lusts as powerfully inveigle thy heart, and carry it away from God as they did some months or years ago? or canst thou in truth say, thy heart is got above them, since thou hast known more of Christ, and had a view of his spiritual glories, thou canst now pass by their door and not look in, yea, when they knock at thy door in a temptation, thou canst shut it upon them, and disdain the motion? surely thou must know thy faith is grown stronger. When we see that the cloaths, which a year or two ago were even fit for the person, will not now come on him (they are so little) we may easily be persuaded to believe the person is much grown since that time. If thy faith were no more grown, those temptations, which fitted thee then, would like thee as well now; find but the power of sin die, and thou mayest know that faith is more lively and vigorous. The harder the blow, the stronger the arm is that gives it. A child cannot strike such a blow as a man. Weak faith cannot give such a home blow to sin as a strong faith can.

Sixthly, The more ingenuity and love is in thy obediential walking, the stronger thy faith is. Faith works by love, and therefore its strength or weakness may be discovered by the strength or weakness of that love it puts forth in the Christians actions. The strength of a mans arm, that draws a bow, is seen by the force the arrow which he shoots flies with. And certainly, the strength of our faith may be known, by the force that our love mounts to God with. It is impossible, that weak faith (which is unable to draw the promise as a strong faith can) should leave such a forcible impression on the heart to love God, as the stronger faith doth. If therefore thy heart be strongly carried out from love to God, to abandon sin, perform duty, and exert acts of obedience to his command; know thy place, and take it with humble thankfulness, thou art a graduate in the Art of believing. The Christians love advanceth by equal paces with his faith; as the heat of the day encreaseth with the climbing Sun; the higher that mounts towards its Meridian, the hotter the day grows. So, the higher faith lifts Christ up in the Christian, the more intense his love to Christ grows, which now sets him on work after another sort, than he was wont. Before, when he was to mourn for his sins, he was acted by a slavish fear, and made an ugly face at the work, as one doth that drinks some displeasing potion; but now acts of repentance are not distasteful and formidable, since faith hath discovered mercy to sit on Justices brow, and undeceived the creature of those false and cruel thoughts of God, which ignorantly he had taken up concerning him. He doth not now have the word Repentance; (as *Luther* said he once did, before he understood that place, *Rom. 1. 17.*) but goes about the work with amiable sweet apprehensions of a good God, that stands ready with the sponge of his mercy, dip't in Christs blood, to blot out his sins, as fast as he scores them up by his humble sorrowful confession of them. And the same might be said

Concerning all other offices of Christian piety; strong faith makes the soul ingenuous, it doth not pay the performance of any duty, as an oppressed subject doth an heavy tax, with a deep sigh, to think how much he parts with, but as freely as a child would present his father with an apple of that orchard, which he holds by gift from him; indeed the child, when young, is much servile and selfish, forbearing what his father forbids, for fear of the rod, and doing what he commands, for some fine thing or other, that his father bribes him with, more than for pure love to his person, or obedience to his will and pleasure; but as he grows up and comes to understand himself better, and the relation he stands in, with the many obligations of it to filial obedience, then his servility and selfishness wears off, and his ~~very~~ or natural affection, will prevail more with him to please his father, than any other argument whatever. And so will it with the Christian, where faith is of any growth and ripeness.

Seventhly, to name no more; the more able faith is to sweeten the thoughts of death, and make it desirable to the Christian, the stronger is faith. Things that are very sharp or sour, will take much sugar to make them sweet. Death is one of those things, which hath the most ungrateful taste to the creatures palate, that can be. O it requires a strong faith to make the serious thoughts of it sweet and desirable. I know some in a pet and passion, have professed great desires of dying, but it hath been, as a sick man desires to change his place, meerly out of a

weariness of, and discontent with his present condition, without any due consideration of what they desire. But a soul, that knows the consequences of death, and the unchangeableness of that state (whether of bliss or misery) that it certainly marries us to, will never cheerfully call for death in his cordial desires, till he be in some measure resolv'd from the promise, what entertainment he may expect from God, when he comes into that other world; And that a weak faith will not do, without abundance of fears and doubts. I confess, that sometime a Christian of very weak faith may meet death with as little fear upon his spirit, yea, more joy; than one of a far stronger faith, when he is held up by the chin, by some extraordinary comfort poured into his soul from God immediately; which should God withdraw, his fears would return upon him, and he feel again his faintings, as a sick man that hath been strangely cheer'd with a strong cordial, does his feebleness, when the efficacy of it is spent: But we speak of the ordinary way how Christians come to have their hearts raised above the fear, yea, into a strong desire of death, and that is by attaining to a strong faith. God can indeed make a feast of a few loaves, and multiply the weak Christians little faith on a sudden, as he lies on a sick bed, into a spread table of all varieties of consolations; but I fear God will not do this miracle for that man or woman, who upon the expectation of this, contents himself with the little provision of faith he hath, and labours not to encrease his store against that spending time.

CHAP. XI.

Sheweth, it is the duty of a Christian to own the grace of God in him, and not deny it; with the resolution of some scruples, with which weak Saints dispute against the truth of their own Faith.

Secondly, We come to the second word of exhortation, we have to speak to the Saints. If faith be such a choice grace, and thou hast it, deny not what God hath done for thee. Which is worth, thinkest thou; the sinner to hide his sin and deny it, or the Christian to hide and deny his faith? I confess the first does worst, if we look to the intention of the persons; for the sinner hides his sin, out of a wicked end, and the doubting soul means well, he is afraid to play the hypocrite, and be found a liar in saying he hath, what he fears he hath not; but if we consider the consequence of the Christians disowning the grace of God in him, and what use the Devil makes of it, for the leading him into many other sins, it will not be so easie to resolve, whose sin is the greatest: Good Joseph meant piously, when he had thoughts of putting away secretly his espoused Mary (thinking no other, but that she had played the whore) and yet, it would have been a sad act, if he had persisted in his thoughts; especially after the Angel had told him, that which was conceived in her to be of the holy Ghost. Thus thou, poor mourning soul, may be and art off thinking to put away thy

faith, as some by-blow of Satan, and base-born counterfeit grace, begot on thy hypocritical heart by the father of lies. Well, take heed what thou doest: hast thou had no vision, (not extraordinary of an Angel or immediate revelation) but ordinary of the Spirit of God, (I mean) in his Word and Ordinances, encouraging thee from those characters which are in the Scripture given of faith, and the conformity thy faith hath to them, to take and own thy faith, as that which is conceived in thee by the holy Ghost, and not a brat form'd by the delusion of Satan in the womb of thy own groundless imagination? If so, be afraid of bearing false witness against the grace of God in thee. As there is that makes himself rich in faith, that hath nothing of this grace, so there is that maketh himself poor, that hath great store of this riches. Let us therefore hear what are the grounds of this thy suspicion, that we may see whether thy fears or thy faith be imaginary and false.

Objct. First, Saith the poor soul, I am afraid I have no true faith, because I have not those joys and consolations, which others have, who believe.

Ans.

Ans. First, Thou mayest have inward peace, though not joy; The day may be still and calm, though not glorious and Sun-shine; though the Comforter be not come with his ravishing consolation, yet he may have hushed the storm of thy troubled spirit, and true peace as well as joy is the consequent of faith unfeigned.

Secondly, Suppose, thou hast not yet attained so much as to this inward peace, yet know, thou hast no reason to question the truth of thy faith, for want of this. We have peace with God as soon as we believe, but not always with our selves. The pardon may be past the Princes hand and Seal, and yet not put into the prisoners hand. Thou think'st them too rash, dost not? who judg'd *Paul* a murderer by the viper that fastened on his hand. And what art thou, who condemn'st thy self for an unbeliever, because of those troubles, and inward agonies, which may lasten for a time on the spirit of the most gracious child God hath on earth?

Object. Secondly, O but can there be any true faith where there is so much doubting as I find in my self?

Ans. There is a doubting which the Scripture opposeth to the least degree of faith. Our blessed Saviour tells them what wonders they shall do, if they believe and doubt not, *Mat. 21. 21.* And *Luke 17. 6.* he tells his Disciples, *If they have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, they shall do as much.* That which is a faith without doubting in *Matthew*, is but as a grain of mustard-seed in *Luke*. But again, there is a doubting which the Scripture opposeth not to the truth of faith, but the strength of faith, *Mat. 14. 31.* *O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?* They are the words of Christ to sinking *Peter*, in which he so chides his doubting, as yet to acknowledge the truth of his faith, though weak. All doubting is evil in its nature; yet some doubting, though evil in it self, doth evidence some grace that is good to be in the person so doubting. As smoke proves some fire, and peevishness, and pettishness in a sick person, that before lay senseless, is a good sign of some mending, though it self a thing bad enough. But the thing here desirable, (I conceive) would be, to give some help to the doubting soul, that he may know, what his doubting is symptomatical of; whether of true faith (though weak) or of no faith. Now for this, I shall lay down four characters of those doubtings which accompany true faith.

First, The doubtings of a true believer, are attended with much shame and sorrow of spirit, even for these doubtings. I appeal to thy conscience (poor doubting soul) whether the consideration of this one sin, doth not cost thee many a salt tear, and heavy sigh, which others know not of? Now I pray, from whence come these? will unbelief mourn for unbelief? or sin put it self to shame? no sure, it shews there is a principle of faith in the soul, that takes Gods part; and cannot see his promises, and name wrong'd by unbelief without protesting against it, and mourning under it, though the hands of this grace be too weak at present to drive the enemy out of the soul, *Deut. 22. 27.* The Law clear'd the *Damascel*,

that cry'd out in the field; and so will the Gospel thee, who sincerely mournest for thy unbelief. That holy man, whoever he was, *Psal. 77.* was far gone in this doubting disease. How many times do we find his unbelief, putting the mercy and faithfulness of God (which should be beyond all dispute in our hearts) to the question and dubious vote in his distempered soul? He might with as much reason have askt his soul whether there was a God, as whether his mercy was clean gone, and his promise fail? yet so far did his fears in this hurry carry him aside; but at last you have him acknowledging his folly, *vers. 10.* and *I said, This is my infirmity.* This, I may thank thee for, O my unbelief, thou enemy of God and my soul: Thou wilt be puzzling me with needless fears, and make me think and speak so unworthily of my God. This prov'd there was faith at the bottom of his unbelief. *Mark 11. 17. Ad*

Secondly, The doubtings of a sincere believer, are accompanied with ardent desires after those things, which it most calls in question and doubts of. The weak believer, he questions, whether God loves him or no, but he desires it more than life; and this is the language of a gracious soul, *Psal. 63. 3.* *Thy loving kindness is better than life.* He doubts whether Christ be his, yet if you should ask him, what value he sets upon Christ, and what he would give for Christ, he can tell you, and that truly, that no price should be too great if he were to be bought; no condition that God offers Christ upon, appears to him hard, but all easie and cheap. And this is the judgement which only the believing soul can have of Christ, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* *unto you therefore which believe he is precious.* In a word, he doubts whether he be truly holy or only counterfeit; but his soul pants and thirsts after those graces most, which he can see least; he, to him should be the more welcome messenger, that brings him the news of a broken heart, than another that tells him of a whole Crown and Kingdom fallen to him; he disputes every duty and action he doth, whether it be according to the rule of the Word; and yet he passionately desires that he could walk without one wry step from it; and doth not quarrel with the word, because it is so strict; but with his heart, because it is so loose; and how great a testimony these give a gracious frame of heart, see *Psal. 119. vers. 20. 140.* where *David* brings these, as the evidence of his grace. Canst thou therefore, poor soul, let out thy heart strongly after Christ, and his graces, while thou dost not see thy interest in either? Be of good cheer, thou art not so great a stranger with these as thou thinkest thy self.

These strong desires are the consequent of some taste thou hast had of them already. And these doubts may proceed, not from an absolute want (as if thou wert wholly destitute of them) but the violence of thy desires, which are not satisfied with what thou hast. It is very ordinary for excessive love to beget excessive fear, and those groundless. The wife because she loves her husband dearly, fears when he is abroad, she shall never see him more, one while she thinks he is sick, another while killed, and thus her love torments her without any just cause, when her husband is all the while well, and on his way home. A Jewel

of great price, or Ring that we highly value, if but laid out of sight, our extreme estimate we set on them, makes us presently think them lost. It is the nature of passions in this our imperfect state, when strong and violent, to disturb our Reason, and hide things from our eye, which else were easie to be seen. Thus many poor doubting souls are looking and hunting to find that faith, which they have already in their bosoms, being hid from them, merely by the vehemency of their desire of it, and fear they should be cheated with a false one for a true; as the *Damocles*, opened not the door for gladness to Peter, *Acts* 12. 14. Her joy at present made her forget what she did; so the high value the poor doubting Christian sets on faith, together with an excess of longing after it, suffers him not to entertain so high an opinion of himself, as to think, he at present hath that Jewel in his bosom, which he so infinitely prizeth.

Thirdly, The doubtings of a truly believing soul, make him more inquisitive how he may get, what he sometimes fears he hath not; many sad thoughts pass to and fro in his soul, whether Christ be his or no; whether he may lay claim to the promise, or no; and these cause such a commotion in his spirit, that he cannot rest till he come to some resolution in his own thoughts from the Word concerning this great case; therefore as *Ahashuerus*, when he could not sleep, called for the Records and Chronicles of his Kingdom; so the doubting soul betakes himself to the Records of Heaven (the Word of God in the Scripture) and one while he is reading there, another while looking into his own heart, if he can find there any thing, that answers the characters of Scripture-faith, as the face in the Glass, doth the face of man. *David*, (*Psal.* 77.) when he was at a loss, what to think of himself, and many doubts did clog his faith, inasmuch that the thinking of God increased his trouble, he did not sit down, and let the ship drive (as we say) not regarding, whether God loved him, or no; but communes with his own heart, and his spirit makes diligent search; Thus it is with every sincere soul under doubtings, he dares no more sit down contented in that unresolv'd condition, than one, who thinks he smells fire in his House, dares settle himself to sleep, till he hath look'd in every Room and corner, and satisfied himself that all is safe, lest he should be waked with the fire about his ears in the Night; and the poor doubting soul much more afraid, lest it should wake with Hell-fire about it. Whereas a soul in a state and under the power of unbelief, is secure and careless. The old World did not believe the threatening of the Flood, and they spend no thoughts about the matter; it is at their doors and windows, before they had used any means how to escape it.

Fourthly, In the midst of the true Believers doubtings, there is an innitency of his heart on Christ, and a secret purpose still to cleave to him; at the same time, that *Peter's* feet were sinking into the waters, he was lifting up a prayer to Christ, and this prov'd the truth of his faith, as the other its weakness: So *Jonah*, he had many fears, and sometimes so predominant, that as bad humours settle into a sore, so

they gather'd into a hasty unbelieving conclusion; yet then his faith had some little secret hold on God: *Jonah* 2. 4. *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy Temple: And, when my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord.* Holy *David* also, though he could not rid his soul of all those fears, which got into it through his weak faith, as water into a leaking ship, yet he hath his hand at the Pump, and takes up a firm resolution against them, *Psal.* 56. 3. *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* The doubting Christian sinks, but as a Traveller in a slough, where the bottom is firm, and so recovers himself; but the unbeliever, he sinks in his fears, as a man in a quicksand, lower and lower till he be swallowed up into despair. The weak Christians doubting is like the wavering of a ship at Anchor; he is moved, yet not removed from his hold on Christ; but the unbelievers, like the wavering of a wave, which having nothing to stay it, is wholly at the mercy of the wind, *Jam.* 1. 6. *Let him ask in faith nothing wavering; for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.*

Object. Thirdly, O but, faith another, I fear mine is a presumptuous faith, and if so, to be sure, it cannot be right.

Answ. For the fuller asswying this Objection, I shall lay down three characters of a presumptuous faith.

First, A presumptuous faith, it is an easie faith; it hath no enemy of Satan, or our own corrupt hearts to oppose it, and so like a stinking weed, shoots up and grows rank on a sudden. The Devil never hath the sinner surer, than when dreaming in this fools Paradise, and walking in his sleep, amidst his vain phantastical hopes of Christ and salvation. And therefore he is so far from waking him, that he draws the curtains close about him, that no light nor noise in his conscience may break his rest; did you ever know the Thief call him up in the Night, whom he meant to rob and kill? No, sleep is his advantage. But true faith he is a sworn enemy against; he persecutes it in the very Cradle, as *Herod* did Christ in Cratch, he pours a flood of wrath after it, as soon as it betrays its own birth, by crying and lamenting after the Lord; if thy faith be legitimate, *Naphtali* may be its name; and thou mayest say, with great wrestlings have, I wrestled with Satan and my own base heart, and at last have prevailed. You know the answer that *Rebekah* had, when she enquired of God about the scuffle and striving of the children in her womb, *Two Nations* (God told her) were in her womb; If thou canst find the like strife in thy soul, thou mayest comfort thy self, that it is from two contrary principles, faith and unbelief, which are lusting one against another; and thy unbelief which is the elder, (however now it strives for the mastery) shall serve faith the younger.

Secondly, Presumptuous faith is lame of one hand, it hath a hand to receive pardon, and Heaven from God, but no hand to give up it self to God; True faith hath the use of both her hands. *My beloved is mine*, there the soul takes Christ; and *I am his*, there she surrenders her self to the use and

weak and doubting Christian.

Peter

and service of Christ. Now, didst thou ever pass over thy self freely to Christ? I know none but will profess they do this. But the presumptuous soul, like *Ananias*, lies to the *Holy Ghost*, by keeping back part, yea, the chief part of that, he promised to lay at Christs feet. This lust he sends out of the way, when he should deliver it up to justice; and that creature-enjoyment he twines about, and cannot persuade his heart to trust God with the disposal of it, but cries out when the Lord calls for it, *Benjamin shall not go*; his life is bound up in it, and if God will have it from him, he must take it by force, for there is no hope of gaining his consent. If this is the true picture of thy faith, and temper of thy soul, then verily thou blestest thy self in an Idol, and mistakest a bold face for a believing heart; But if thou beest as willing to be faithful to Christ, as to pitch thy faith on Christ; if thou countest it as great a privilege, that Christ should have a Throne in thy heart and love, as that thou shouldst have a place and room in his mercy: In a word, if thou beest plain-hearted, and wouldst not hide a sin, nor lock up a creature-enjoyment from him, but desirest freely to give up thy dearest lust to the Gibbet, and thy sweetest enjoyments, to stay with, or go from thee, as thy God thinks fit to allow thee (though all this be with much regret and discontent from a malignant party of the flesh within thee) thou provest thy self a sound Believer. And the Devil may as well say that himself believeth, as that thou presumest; if this be to presume, be thou yet more presumptuous. Let the Devil nick-name thee and thy faith as he pleaseth; the Rose-water is not the less sweet, because one writes Worm-wood-water on the Glass. The Lord knows who are his, and will own them for his true children, and their graces for the sweet fruits of his Spirit, though a false title be set on them by Satan and the World, yea, sometimes by Believers on themselves. The father will not deny his child, because he is in a violent fit of a fever, talks idle, and denyes him to be his father.

Thirdly, The presumptuous faith is a sapless and unfavoury faith; when an unsound heart pretends to greatest faith on Christ, even then it finds little favour, tastes little sweetness in Christ. No, he hath his old tooth in his head, which makes him relish still the gross food of sensual enjoyments above Christ and his spiritual dainties; would he but freely speak what he thinks, he must confess, that if he were put to his choice, whether he would sit with Christ, and his children, to be entertained with the pleasures that they enjoy, from spiritual communion with him in his Promises, Ordinances, and holy wayes; or had rather sit with the Servants, and have the Scraps, which God allows the men of the World, their full bags and bellies of carnal treasure; that he would prefer the latter before the former. He brags of his interest in God, but he cares not how little he is in the presence of God in any Duty or Ordinance; certainly if he were such a Favourite as he speaks, he would be more at Court than he is. He hopes to be saved, he saith, but he draws not his wine of joy at his tap: It is not the thoughts of Heaven that comforts him, but what he hath in the World, and of the World, these maintain his joy; when the Worlds Vessel is out, and creature-joy spent, alas, the poor wretch can find little relief from, or relish in his pretended hopes of Heaven, and interest in Christ; but he is still whining after the other. Whereas true faith alters the very creatures palate: No feast so sweet to the Believer, as Christ is; let God take all other Dishes off the board, and leave but Christ; he counts his feast is not gone, he hath what he likes; but let all else stand, Health, Estate, Friends (and what else the World sets a high value on) if Christ be withdrawn, he soon misseth his Dish, and makes his moan, and saith, alas, who hath taken away my Lord? It is Christ that seasons these and all his enjoyments, and makes them savoury meat to his palate, but without him, they have no more taste than the white of an Egg without salt.

CHAP. XII.

The Saints Enemy described with his warlike provision, fiery darts, and what they are.

WE have done with the Exhortation. And now come to the second general part of the verse, i. e. A powerful Argument pressing this Exhortation, contained in these words; *Whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* *Ye shall be able*, not an uncertain, may be ye shall; but he is peremptory and absolute; *Ye shall be able*, but what to do? *able to quench*, not only to resist and repel, but to quench: But what shall they quench? not ordinary temptations only, but the worst Arrows the Devil hath in his quiver, *fiery darts*, and not some few of them, but *all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

In this second General, there are these two particulars.

First, The Saints Enemy described.

Secondly, The power and puissance of faith over this Enemy. First of the first.

First, The Saints Enemy described, that in three particulars.

First, In its nature, wicked.

Secondly, In their unity, wicked, or wicked one, *ὁ ὄνους*, in the singular number.

Thirdly, Their warlike furniture and provision, with which they take the field against the Saints. Darts, and they fiery.

First, Here is the Saints Enemy described by their nature, *Wicked*: something I have said of this, v. 12. where Satan is called *spiritual wickednesses*; I shall at present therefore pass it over with the lighter hand. Certainly there is some special lesson, that God would have his people learn even from this attribute

tribute of the Devil and his limbs (for the whole pack of Devils, and devilish men, are here intended) that they are represented to the Saints consideration by this name so oft as *wicked*. I shall content my self with two ends, that I conceive God principally aims at by this name: First, They are called *wicked*, as an odious name, whereby God would raise his peoples stomachs to a loathing of them, yea, provoke their pure souls to the greatest hatred of them, and especially of sin that makes them so odious.

First, They are called *wicked*, as an odious name, whereby God would raise his childrens stomachs into a loathing of sin above all things in the World, and provoke their pure souls as to hatred and detestation of all sin, so a vigorous resistance of the Devil, and his instruments as such who are wicked; which is a name that makes him detestable above any other. God would have us know, that when he himself would speak the worst he can of the Devil, he can think of no name for the purpose, like this, to say, he is *the wicked one*: The name which exalts God highest, and is the very excellency of all his other excellencies, is, that he is *The holy one*, and *none holy as the Lord*. This therefore gives the Devil the blackest brand of infamy, that he is the wicked one, and none wicked to that height, besides himself. Could Holiness be separated from any other of Gods Attributes (which is the height of blasphemy to think) the glory of them would be departed. And could the Devils wickedness be removed from his torments and misery, the case would be exceedingly altered; we ought then to pity him, whom now we must no less than hate and abominate with a perfect hatred.

First, Consider this, all ye who live in sin, and blush not to be seen in the practice of it. O that you would behold your faces in this Glass, and you should see whom you look like; truly, no other than the Devil himself, and in that which makes him most odious, which is his wickedness. Never more spit at the name of the Devil, nor seem to be scared at any ill-shapen picture of him, for thou carriest a far more ugly one (and the truest of him that is possible) in thy own wicked bosom. The more wicked, the more like the Devil; who can draw the Devils picture like himself? If thou beest a wicked wretch, thou art of the Devil himself. *Cain* (as it is said) *was of that wicked one*, 1 John 3. 12. Every sin thou committest, is a new line, that the Devil draws on thy soul. And if the image of God in a Saint, which the Spirit of God is drawing for many years together in a Saint, will be so curious a piece, when the last line shall be drawn in Heaven: O think then, how frightful and horrid a creature thou wilt appear to be, when after all the Devils pains here on Earth to imprint his image upon thee, thou shalt see thy self in Hell, as wicked to the full, as a wicked Devil can make thee.

Secondly, Consider this, O ye Saints, and bestow first your pity on those poor forlorn souls that are under the power of a wicked Devil. It is a lamentable judgement to live under a wicked Government, though it be but of men. For a servant in a family

to be under a wicked Master, is a heavy plague. *David* reckons it among other great curses, *Psal. 109. 6. Set a wicked man over him*. O what is it then to have a wicked spirit over him? He would shew himself very kind to his friend, that should wish him to be the worst slave in *Turky*, rather than the best servant of sin and Satan. And yet see the folly of men; *Solomon* tells us, *When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn*, Prov. 9. 2. But when a wicked Devil rules, poor besotted sinners laugh and are merry. Well, you who are not out of your wits so far, but know sins service to be the creatures utmost misery, mourn for them, that go themselves laughing to sin, and by sin to Hell. And, *Secondly*, Let it fill thy heart (Christian) with zeal and indignation against Satan in all his temptations, remember he is wicked, and he can come for no good: Thou knowest the happiness of serving a holy God, surely then thou hast an answer ready by thee, against this wicked one comes to draw thee to sin. Canst thou think of fouling thy hands about his base nasty drudgery, after they have been used to so pure and fine work as the service of thy God is? listen not to Satans motions, except thou hast a mind to be wicked.

First, They are called wicked, as a name of contempt, for the encouragement of all Believers in their combat with them. As if God had said, fear them not, they are a wicked company you go against; cause, and they who defend it, both wicked. And truly, if the Saints must have Enemies, the worse they are, the better it is. It would put mettle into a Coward, to fight with such a Crew. Wickedness must needs be weak; the Devils guilt in their own bosoms tells them, their cause is lost, before the battel is fought. They fear thee, Christian, because thou art holy, and therefore thou need'st not be dismay'd at them who are wicked. Thou lookest on them as subtle, mighty and many, and then thy heart fails thee; but look on all these subtle mighty spirits as wicked ungodly wretches, that hate God more than thee, yea, thee for thy kindred to him, and thou canst not but take heart. Whose side is God on, that thou art afraid? Will he, that rebuk'd Kings for touching his anointed ones, and doing them harm in their bodies and estates, stand still thinkest thou, and suffer these wicked spirits, to attempt the life of God himself in thee, thy grace, thy holiness without coming in to thy help? it is impossible.

Secondly, The Saints Enemy is set out by their unity: fiery darts of the wicked, *is wrought*, of the wicked one. As if all were shot out of the same bow, and by the same hand. As if the Christians fight were a single Duel with one single Enemy. All the legions of Devils, and multitudes of wicked men and women, make but one great Enemy: They are all one mystical body of wickedness, as Christ and his Saints one mystical holy body. One Spirit acts Christ and his Saints; so one spirit acts Devils, and ungodly men his limbs; the soul is in the little Toe, and the spirit of the Devil in the least of sinners. But I have spoke something of this subject elsewhere.

Thirdly, The Saints Enemy is here described by his

his warlike provision, or weapons he useth in fight against them. *Darts*, and those of the worst kind, *fiery darts*.

First, Darts, the Devils temptations are the darts he useth against the souls of men and women, and may fitly be so called in a threefold respect.

First, Darts or arrows, they are swift; Thence is our usual expression, *As swift as an arrow out of a bowe*. Lightning is called Gods *Arrow*, because it flies swiftly. *Psal. 18. 14. He sent out his arrows and scattered them, he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them*; that is, lightning like arrows. Satans temptations flie like a flash of lightning, not long of coming. He needs no more time than the cast of an eye for the dispatch of a temptation. *David's* eye did but unawares fall upon *Bathsheba*, and the Devils arrow was in his heart, before he could shut this case ment; or the hearing of a word or two. Thus when *David's* servants had told what *Nabal* the Churl said, *David's* choler was presently up; an arrow of revenge wounded him to the heart; what quicker than a thought? yet, how oft is that a temptation to us? one silly thought riseth in a Duty, and our hearts (before intent upon the work) are on a sudden carried away, like a Spaniel after a Bird, that springs up before him as he goes after his Master; yea, if one temptation speeds not, how soon can he send another after it? (as quick as the nimblest Archer) no sooner that one arrow is delivered, but he hath another on the string.

Secondly, Darts or arrows flie secretly; and so do temptations. First, The arrow oft comes afar off; a man may be wounded with a dart, and not see who shot it. The wicked are said, to shoot their arrows in secret at the perfect, *Psal. 64. 4. And then, they say, Who shall see them? vers. 4.* Thus Satan lets flie a temptation so secretly, that he is hardly suspected in the thing. Sometimes he useth a Wifes tongue to do his Errand; another while, he gets behind the back of a Husband, Friend, Servant, &c. and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a Devil in Peter tempting his Master; or suspected, that *Abraham* should be his instrument, to betray his beloved Wife into the hands of a sin? yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret, that he borrows Gods bowe to shoot his arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is God chides, and is angry, when it is the Devil that tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits Gods voice. *Job* cries out of arrows of the Almighty, how the poison of them drank up his spirit, and of the terrors of God, that did set themselves in array against him, *Job 6. 4.* When it was Satan all the while that was practising his malice, and playing his pranks upon him, God was friends with this good man, only Satan begg'd leave (and God gave it for a time) thus to affright him. And poor *Job* cries out, as if God had cast him off, and were become his Enemy. Secondly, Darts or Arrows, they make little or no noise as they go, they cut their passage through the Air, without telling us by any crack or report (as the Cannon doth) that they are coming. Thus insensibly doth temptation make its approach.

The Thief is in, before we think of any need to shut the doors. The wind is a creature secret in its motion, of which our Saviour saith, *We know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes, Joh. 3. 8.* Yet, we hear the sound thereof, as our Saviour saith in the same place. But temptations many times come and give us no warning by any sound they make. The Devil lays his plot so close, that the soul sees not his drift, observes not the Hook till he finds it in his belly. As the woman of *Tekoa* told her Tale so handsomely, that the King passeth judgement against himself in the person of another before he smelt out the business.

Thirdly, Darts have a wounding killing nature, especially, when well headed, and shot out of a strong Bowe, by one that is able to draw it; such are Satans temptations, headed with desperate malice; and drawn by a strength no less than Angelical; and this against so poor a weak creature as man; that it were impossible, had not God provided good Armour, for our soul to out-stand Satans power, and get safe to Heaven. Christ would have us sensible of their force and danger, by that petition in his prayer which the best of Saints on this side Heaven have need to use; *lead us not into temptation.* Christ was then but newly out of the list; where he had tasted Satans tempting skill and strength, which though beneath his wisdom and power to defeat; yet well he knew, it was able to worst the strongest of Saints. There was never any besides Christ, that Satan did not foyle more or less; 'Twas Christs prerogative to be tempted, but not led into temptation. *Job*, one of the chief Worthies in Gods Army of Saints, who from Gods mouth is a *none-such*, yet was gall'd by these Arrows shot from Satans Bowe, and put to great disorder. God was faine to pluck him out of the Devils gripe, or else he had been quite worried by that Lyon.

Secondly, Satans warlike provision is, not only darts, but *fiery darts*; some restrain these fiery darts to some particular kind of temptation, as despair, blasphemy, and those which fill the heart with terror and horror; but this (I conceive) is too strait; because faith is a shield for all kind of temptations, and indeed there is none but may prove a fiery temptation; so that I should rather incline to think, all sorts of temptations to be comprehended here, yet so as to respect some in an especial manner more than other; which afterwards shall be instant'd in.

Quest. Why are Satans darts call'd fiery ones?

Ans. First, They may be said to be fiery, in regard of that fiery wrath with which Satan shoots them; they are the fire, this Dragon spits, full of indignation against God and his Saints. *Saul*, it is said, *Breath'd out threatening and slaughter against the Church, Acts 9. 1.* As one that is inwardly inflamed, his breath is hot, a fiery stream of persecuting wrath, came as out of a burning furnace from him; temptations are the breathings of the Devils wrath.

Secondly, Fiery in regard of the end they lead to, if not quench'd, and that is Hell-fire, there is a spark of Hell in every temptation. And all sparks flie to

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their Element, so all temptations tend to Hell and damnation, according to Satans intent and purpose.

Thirdly, and chiefly, Fiery, in regard of that malignant quality, they have on the spirits of men, and that is to enkindle a fire in the heart, and consciences of poor creatures; the Apostle alludes to

the custom of cruel Enemies, who used to dip the heads of their Arrows in some poyson, whereby they became more deadly, and did not only wound the part where they light, but enflame the whole body, which made the cure more difficult; *Job speaks of the poyson of them which drank up his spirits, Job 6.* They have an envenoming and inflaming quality.

CHAP. XIII.

The fiery nature of Satans enticing temptations, with Faiths power to quench them.

They are of two sorts, either those that do pleasantly entice and bewitch with some seeming promises of satisfaction to the creature; Or,

Secondly, Such as affright, and carry horror with them; both are fiery, and quenched by faith, and only faith. We shall begin with the first, such as do pleasingly entice. And the Note is this;

Dott. That faith will enable a soul to quench the fire of Satans most pleasing temptations.

First, We shall shew you, that these enticing temptations have a fiery quality in them.

Secondly, That faith is able to quench them.

First, of the first, They have an enflaming quality. There is a secret disposition in the heart of all, to all sin; temptation doth not fall on us as a Ball of fire on Ice or Snow, but as a spark on Tinder, or lightning on a thatch'd Roof, which presently is on a flame; hence in Scripture, though tempted by Satan, yet the sin is charged on us, *Jam. 1. 14. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed; Mark! 'tis Satan tempts, but our own lust draws us.* The fowler lays the shrapp, but the Birds own desire betrays it into the Net. The heart of man is marvellous prone to take fire from these darts. *Where no wood is, the fire goeth out, Prov. 26.* and does no hurt, thus did they on Christ; there was no combustible matter of corruption in him for Satan to work upon. But our hearts being once heat in Adam, could never cool since. A sinners heart is compar'd to an Oven, *Hos. 7. 4. They are all adulterers, as an Oven heated by the baker.* The heart of man is the Oven, the Devil the Baker, and temptation the fire with which he heats it, and then no sin comes amiss; *I dwell, saith David, Psal. 57. among those that are set on fire, and I pray who sets them on fire? the Apostle will resolve us, Jam. 3. 6. set on fire of hell.* Oh friends! when once the heart is inflamed by temptation, what strange effects doth it produce? how hard to quench such a fire, though in a gracious person? *David himself under the power of a temptation, so apparant, that a carnal eye could see it, (Feah I mean, who reprov'd him) yet was hurried to the loss of seventy thousand mens lives (for so much that one sin cost.)* And if the fire be so raging in a David, what work will it make, where no water is nigh, no grace in the heart to quench it? Hence the wicked are said to be mad on their sins, *Jer. 50. 38. Spurring on without fear, or wit; like a man enflamed with a fever, that takes his head, there is no hold-*

ing of him in his Bed; Thus a soul possess'd with the fury of temptation, runs into the mouth of Death and Hell, and will not be stopped.

Use 1. Oh how should this make us afraid of running into a temptation, when there is such a witchery in it. Some men are too confident, they have too good an opinion of themselves, as if they could not be taken with such a disease; and therefore will breathe in any Air. 'Tis just with God to let such be shot with one of Satans darts, to make them know their own hearts better. Who will pity him, whose House is blown up, that kept his powder in the Chimney-corner? *Am I a Dog? (saith Hael) 2 Kings 8.* Do you make me a Beast, sunk so far below the nature of man, as to embrew my hands in these horrid murders? yet, how soon did this wretch fall into the temptation, and by that one bloody act upon his own Liege Lord (which he perpetrated as soon as he got home) shew, that the other evils, which the Prophet foretold of him, were not so improbable as at first he thought. Oh stand off the Devils mark, unless you mean to have one of the Devils Arrows in your side! keep as far from the whirl of temptation as may be. For if once he get you within his Circle, thy head may soon be dizzy. One sin helps to kindle another; the less the greater, as the brush the logges. *Hos. 7. 5. When the Courtiers had got their King to Caroule, and play the Drunkard, he soon learn'd to play the scorner; The Princes have made him sick with bottles of wine, he stretched out his hand with sinners.*

Secondly, Have Satans darts such an enkindling nature? Take heed of being Satans instrument, in putting fire to the corruption of another. Some on purpose do it, thus the Whore perfumes her bed, paints her face; Idolaters are whorish as the other, let out their Temples and Altars with superstitious Pictures, embellish'd with all the cost that Gold and Silver can afford them, to bewitch the Spectators eye. Hence they are said, to be inflamed with their Idols, *Isa. 57. 5.* as much as any lover with his Mission in her whorish dress. And the Drunkard he enkindles his Neighbours lust, putting the bottle to him, *Hab. 2. 15.* Oh! what a base work are these men employed about? by the Law 'tis death for any wilfully to set fire on his Neighbours house? what then deserve they, that set fire on the souls of men, and that no less than Hell-fire? But 'tis possible thou mayest do it unawares, by a less matter than thou dreamest

dreamest on. A silly child playing with a light straw, may set a House on fire, which many wise men cannot quench. And truly Satan may use thy folly and carelessness, to kindle lust in another's heart. Perhaps an idle light speech drops from thy mouth, and thou meanest no great hurt; but a gust of temptation may carry this spark into thy friends bosom, and kindle a sad fire there. A wanton Attire (perhaps naked breasts and shoulders) which we will suppose thou wearest with a chaste heart, and only because 'tis the fashion, yet may ensnare another's eye. And if he that keeps a Pit open but to the hurt of a beast, sinn'd, how much more thou, who givest occasion to a souls sin, which is a worse hurt? Paul would not see flesh, while the world stood, if it made his brother to offend, 1 Cor. 8. 13. And canst thou do as a foolish dress, an immodest fashion, whereby many may offend, still to wear it? The body, Christ faith, is better than rayment. The soul then of thy brother is more to be valued surely than an idle fashion of thy Rayment.

We come to the second branch of the point. That faith will enable a soul to quench these temptations. This is call'd our victory over the world, even our faith, 1 John 5. 4. Faith sets its triumphant banner on the Worlds head. The same St. John will tell you, what is meant by the World, Chap. 2. 15, 16. Love not the world, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. All that is in the World is said to be lust, because it is food and fuel for lust. Now faith enables the soul to quench those darts, which

Satan dips and invenes with these worldly darts. Call'd by some, the worldlings Trinity.

First, For the lust of the flesh, under which are comprehended those temptations, that promise pleasure and delight to the flesh; these indeed carry fire in the mouth of them: And when they light on a carnal heart, do soon enflame it, with unruly passions, and heafly affections. The Adulterer is said to burn in his lust, Rom. 1. 27. The Drunkard to be inflam'd with his wine, Esay 5. 11. No sort of temptation works more strongly, than those which present sensual pleasure, and promise delight to the flesh; sinners are said, to work all uncleanness with greediness; with a kind of covetousness, for the word imports, they never have enough; when the voluptuous person hath wasted his Estate, jaded his body in luxury, still the fire burns in his wretched heart; no drink will quench a poyson'd mans thirst; nothing but faith can be helpful to a soul in these flames. We find Devils in Hell burning, and not a drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue, found there. The unbelieving sinner, is in a Hell above ground, he burns in his lust, and not a drop of water (for want of faith) to quench the fire; by faith 'tis said those glorious Martyrs, Heb. 11. quenched the violence of the fire; and truly the fire of lust is as hot, as the fire of Martyrdom; by faith alone this is quenched also, Tit. 3. 3, 4. We were sometimes foolish; serving divers lusts and pleasures, but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, before he saved us. Never could they shake off these lusts, the old companions, till by faith they got a new acquaintance with the grace of God revealed in the Gospel.

CHAP. XIV.

How faith quencheth the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and pride of life.

SECT. I.

QUest. How does faith quench this fiery dart of sensual delights?

Ans. As it undeceives, and takes off the mist from the Christians eyes, whereby he is now enabled to see sin in its naked being, and callow principles, before Satan hath plum'd. It gives him the native taste and relish of sin, before the Devil hath sophisticated it with his sugred sawce. And truly, now sin proves a homely piece, a bitter morsel. Faith hath a piercing eye, it is the evidence of things not seen; it looks behind the Curtain of sense, and sees sin before its finery was on, and it be dress'd for the stage; to be a Brat that comes from Hell, and brings Hell with it. Now let Satan come if he please, and present a lust never so enticing, the Christians answer is ready; be not cheated on my soul (faith faith) with a lying spirit. He shews thee a fair Rachel, but he intends thee a bleary'd Leah; he promises joy, but he will pay thee sorrow. The cloaths that make this lust so comely, are not its own. The sweetness thou tasteest is not native, but borrowed to deceive thee

withal. Thou art Saul (said the woman of Endor) why hast thou deceived me? Thus, faith can call sin and Satan by their own names, when they come in a disguise; thou art Satan, faith faith, why wouldst thou deceive me? God hath said, sin is bitter as gall and wormwood, and wouldst thou make me believe I can gather the sweet fruits of true delight from this root of bitterness? grapes from these thorns?

Secondly, Faith doth not only enable the soul to see the nature of all sin void of true treasure, but also how transient its false pleasures are, I will not lose faith faith, sure mercies, for transient uncertain pleasures. This made Moses leap out of the pleasures of the Egyptian Court, into the fire of affliction, Heb. 11. 25. because he saw them pleasures for a season. Should you see a man in a ship, throw himself overboard into the sea, you might at first think him out of his wits, but if a little while after you should see him stand safe on the shoar, and the ship swallowed up of the waves, you would then think he took the wisest course. Faith sees the world, and all the pleasures of sin sinking, there is a leak in them which the wit of man cannot stop. Now is it not better to swim by

faith through a sea of trouble, and get safe to heaven at last, than to sit in the lap of sinful pleasures, till we drown in Hells gulf? 'tis impossible the pleasure of sin should last long.

First, Because 'tis not natural: Whatever is not natural, soon decays; the nature of sugar is to be sweet; and therefore it holds its sweetness; but sweeten beer or wine never so much with sugar, in a few days they will lose their sweetness. The pleasure of sin is extrinsecal to its nature, and therefore will corrupt. None of that sweetness, which now bewitches sinners, will be tasted in Hell. The sinner shall have his cup spiced there, by his hand; that will have it a bitter draught.

Secondly, The pleasures of sin must needs be short, because life cannot be long, and they both end together. Indeed many times the pleasure of sin dyes, before the man dyes, sinners live to bury their joy in this world. The worm breeds in their conscience, before it breeds in their flesh by death. But be sure, the pleasure of sin never survives this world. The Word is gone out of Gods mouth, every sinner shall *lie down in sorrow, and wake in sorrow*. Hell is too hot a climate for wanton delights to live in. Now faith is a provident wise grace, and makes the soul bethink it self how it may live in another world: whereas the carnal heart is all for the present; his snout is in the trough, and while his draught lasts, he thinks it will never end. But faith hath a large stride, at one pace it can reach over a whole life of years, and see them done while they are but beginning: *I have seen an end of all perfection*, faith *David*; he saw the wicked when growing on their bed of pleasure, cut down, and burning in Gods oven, as if it were done already, *Psal. 37. 2*. And faith will do the like for every Christian, according to its strength and activity. And who would envy the condemned man his feast, which he hath in his way to the Gallows?

Thirdly, Faith out-vies Satans proffers, by shewing the soul where choicer enjoyments are to be had at a cheaper rate. Indeed, *best is best cheap*. Who will not go to that shop where he may be best served? This Law holds in force among sinners themselves; The drunkard goes where he may have the best wine; the glutton, where he may have the best cheer. Now faith presents such enjoyments to the soul, that are beyond all compare best; it leads to the promise, and entertains it there at Christs cost, with all the rich dainties of the Gospel; not a dish that the Saints feed on in heaven, but faith can set it before the soul, and give it (though not a full meal) yet such a taste, as shall melt it in joy unspeakable and full of glory. This sure must needs quench the temptation. When Satan sends to invite the Christian to his gross fare, will not the soul say, Should I forsake those pleasures that cheated, yea, ravish'd my heart; to go and debase my self with sins polluted bread, where I shall be but a fellow-commoner with the beast, (who shares in sensual pleasures with man) yea, become worse than the beast; a Devil, like *Judas*, who arose from his Masters table, to sit at the Devils?

SECT. III.

Secondly, *The lusts of the eye*, these are quenched by faith; by the lust of the eye, the *Apostle* means those temptations which are drawn from the world self and treasure; called so, *First*, Because 'tis the eye that commits adultery with these things; as the unclean eye looks on another mans wife; so the covetous eye looks on anothers wealth to lust after it. Secondly, Because that all the good that in a manner is receiv'd from them, is but to please the eye, *Eccles. 5. 11*. *What good is there to the owner thereof, saving the beholding them with their eyes?* That is, if a man hath but to buy any food and raiment, enough to pay his daily shot of necessary expences, the surpluse serves only for the eye to play the wanton with; yet woe be how pleasing a morsel they are to a carnal heart. 'Tis rare to find a man that will not stoop by base and sordid practices, to take up this golden apple. When I consider what sad effects this temptation had on *Abab*, who to gain a spot off ground of a few acres, (that could not add much to a Kings revenue) durst swim to it in the owners blood; I wonder not to see men, whose condition is necessitous; nibbling at the hook of temptation, where the bait is a far greater worldly advantage. This is the door that the Devil entered into *Judas*; by: This was the break-neck of *Demas* faith, *he embraced this present world*. Now faith will quench a temptation edg'd with these.

First, Faith persuades the soul of Gods fatherly care and providence over it. And where this break work is rais'd, the soul is safe, so long as it keeps within its line. Oh! faith Satan, if thou wouldst but venture on a lye, make bold a little with God in such a command, this wedge of gold is thine, and that advantage will accrue to thy estate. Now faith will teach the soul to reply; I am well provided for already; Satan I need not thy pension; why should I play the thief for that, which if good, God hath promis'd to give? *Heb. 13. 5*. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. How canst thou want, oh my soul, that by the promise hast command of Gods purse? Let him that is without God in the world, shift and sherk by his wits; do thou live by thy faith.

Secondly, Faith teaches the soul, that the creatures comfort and content comes not from abundance, but Gods blessing: And to gain the world by a sin, is not the road that leads to Gods blessing, *Prov. 28. 20*. *A faithful man abounds with blessings; but he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent*. Shouldst thou (faith faith) heap up the worlds goods in an evil way, thou art never the nearer to the content thou expectest; 'tis hard to steal ones meat, and then crave a blessing on it at Gods hands. What thou getst by sin, Satan cannot give thee quiet possession of, nor discharge those suits, which God will surely commence against thee.

Thirdly, Faith advanceth the soul to higher projects,

projects, than to seek the things of this life. It discovers a world beyond the Moon: And there lies such Merchandize; leaving the Colliers of this world to load themselves with clay and coals, while it trades for grace and glory; faith fetcheth its riches from on far. *Saul* did not more willingly leave seeking his Fathers Alls, when he heard of a Kingdom, than the believing soul leaves pröling for the earth, now it hears of Christ and heaven, *Psal.* 39. 6, 7. *verse 6.* we find holy *David* branding the men of the world for folly, that they troubled themselves so much for nought; *Surely, faith he, they are disquised in vain; he heapeb up riches, and knoweth not what shall gather them;* and *verse 7.* we have him with a holy disdain, turning his back upon the world, as not worth his pains, and now *Lord, what wait I for?* As if he had said, Is this the portion I could be content to sit down with? to sit upon a greater heap of riches, than my neighbour hath? *My hope is in thee; deliver me from all my transgressions,* ver. 8. Every one as they like. Let them that love the world, take the world; but Lord pay not my portion in gold, or silver, but in pardon of sin, this I wait for. *Abraham*, he by faith had so low an esteem of this worlds treasure, that he left his own countrey to live here a stranger, in hope of a better, *Heb.* 11.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, The lust of the world, *The pride of life.* There is an itch of pride in mans heart after the gaudy honours of the world; and this itch of mans proud flesh, the Devil labours to scratch and irritate by suitable proffers. And when the temptation without, and lust within meet, then it works to purpose. *Balaam* lov'd the way that led to Court; and therefore spurs on his conscience (that boggl'd more than the As he rode on) till the blood came. The Jews, when convinced of Christs person, and doctrine; yet were such slaves to their honour and credit, that they part with Christ, rather than hazard that, *John* 12. 43. *For they love the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* Now faith quenches this temptation, and with a holy scorn disdains, that all the preferment the world hath to heap on him, should be a bribe for the least sin, *Heb.* 11. 24. *By faith Moses, when he was some years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter.* Though by his Adoption, he might have been heir for ought we know, to the Crown; yet this he threw at his heels: It is not said, he did not seek to be the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, though that would have founded a high commendation, having so fair an opportunity; some would not have scrupl'd a little Court flattery, thereby to have cologu'd themselves into further favour (having so fair a stock in the Kings heart to set up with;) but he refused to be called; honour came trouling in upon him, as water at a flowing tyde: now, to stand against this flood of preferment, and no breach made in his heart to entertain it; this was admirable indeed. Nay, he did not refuse this preferment for any principality that he hoped for elsewhere. He forsook not one Court to go to another, but to joyn with a beggarly reproached people; yea,

by rejecting their favour, he incur'd the wrath of the King, yet faith carried him through all those heights and depths of favour, and disgrace, honor and dishonour. And truly, where ever this grace is (allowing for its strength and weakness,) it will do the like; we find, *verse 33.* in the same Chapter, how *Samuel* and the Prophets, through faith subdued Kingdoms; which sure is not only meant of the conquest of the sword (though some of them perform'd honourable atchievements that way) but also by despising the honour and preferments of them. This indeed many of the Prophets are famous for; and in particular, *Samuel*, who at Gods command gave away a Kingdom from his own house and family, by anointing *Saul*, though himself at present had possession of the chief Magistrates chair. And others, *verse 37.* we read were tempted; that is (when ready to suffer) were offer'd great preferments, if they would bend to the times, by receding a little from the bold profession of their faith: But they chose rather the flames of Martyrdom, than the favour of Princes on those terms.

But more particularly to shew you, how faith quenches this temptation.

First, Faith takes away the fuel that feeds this temptation; withdraw the oyl, and the Lamp goes out. Now that which is fuel to this temptation, is pride; where this lust is in any strength, no wonder the creatures eyes are dazled with the light of that which suits the desires of his heart so well. The Devil now by a temptation does but broach, and so give vent to what the heart it self is full with. *Simon Magus* had a haughty spirit, he would be *Simon Magnus*, some great man: and therefore when he did but think an opportunity was offer'd to mount him up the stage, he is all on fire with a desire of having a gift to work miracles, that he dares offer to play the huckster with the Apostles. Whereas a humble spirit loves a low seat, is not ambitious to stand high in the thoughts of others, and so, while he stoops in his own opinion of himself, the bullet flies over his head, which hits the proud man on the breast. Now 'tis faith lays the heart low. Pride and faith are oppos'd; like two buckets, if one goes up, the other goes down in the soul, *Hab.* 2. 4. *Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*

Secondly, Faith is Christs favourite; and so makes the Christian expect all his honour from him; indeed 'tis one of the prime acts of faith, to cast the soul on God in Christ, as all-sufficient to make it completely happy. And therefore when a temptation comes; soul, thou maist raise thy self in the world, to this place, or that esteem, if thou wilt but dissemble thy profession, or allow thy self in such a sin. Now faith choaks the bullet. Remember whose thou art, Oh my soul; hast thou not taken God for thy Liege Lord, and wilt thou not accept preferment from anothers hand? Princes will not suffer their Courtiers to become Pensioners to a foreign Prince, least of all to a Prince in hostility to them: Now faith faith, the honour or applause thou gettest by sin, makes thee Pensioner to the Devil himself, who is the greatest enemy God hath.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Faith shews the danger of such a bargain, should a Christian gain the glory of the world for one sin.

First, Saith faith, hadst thou the whole worlds Empire, with all bowing before thee, this would not add to thy stature one cubit in the eye of God. But thy sin which thou payest for the purchase, blots thy name in his thoughts, yea, makes thee odious in his sight; God must first be out of love with himself, before he can love a sinner as such. Now wilt thou incur this for that? Is it wisdom to lose a prize, to draw a blank?

Secondly, Saith faith, the worlds pomp and glory cannot satisfie thee; it may kindle thirstings in thy soul, but quench none; it will beget a thousand cares and fears, but quiet none. But thy sin that procures these, hath a power to torment and torture thy soul.

Thirdly, When thou hast the worlds Crown on thy head, how long shalt thou wear it? They are sick at Rome (as he said) and dye in Princes Courts, as well as at the Spittle; yea, Kings themselves are put as naked to their beds of dust as others. In that day all thy thoughts will perish with thee: But the guilt of thy sin, which was the ladder by which thou didst climb up the hill of honour, will dogg thee into another world. These and such like are the considerations by which faith breaks off the bargain.

Fourthly, Faith presents the Christian with the exploits of former Saints, who have renounced the worlds honour and applause, rather than defile their consciences, and prostitute their souls to be defouled by the least sin. Great *Tamberlain* carried the lives of his Ancestors into the field with him, in which he used to read before he gave battel, that he might be stirred up, not to stain the blood of his fa-

mily by cowardize, or any unworthy behaviour in fight. Thus faith peruses the roll of Scripture. Saints, and the exploits of their faith over the world, that the Christian may be excited to the same gallantry of spirit. This was plainly the *Apostles* design, in recording those Worthies, with the trophies of their faith, *Heb. 11.* that some of their nobleness might steal into our hearts, while we are reading of them, as appears chap. 12. 1. *Seeing we also are compass'd about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us.* Oh, what courage does it put into the souldier, to see some before him to run upon the face of death? *Elisha* having seen the miracles God wrought by *Elijah*, smites the waters of *Jordan* with his Mantle, saying, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* and they parted, *2 Kings 2. 14.* Thus faith makes use of the exploits of former Saints, and turns them into prayer. Oh where is the Lord God of *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Samuel*, and those other Worthies, who by their faith have trampled on the worlds pomp and glory, subdued temptations, stopp'd the mouths of lion-like lusts? Art not thou O God, the God of the valleys, the meanest Saints, as well as of the mountains, more eminent Heroes? Do not the same blood, and spirits run in the veins of all believers? Were they victorious, and shall I be the only slave, and of so prostrate a spirit, like *Issachar*, to couch under my burden of corruption, without shaking it off? Help me O my God, that I may be avenged of these mine enemies. And when it hath been with God, it will also plead with the Christian himself. Awake, saith faith, oh my soul, and prove thy self a-kin to these holy men, that thou art born of God as they were, by thy victory over the world.

CHAP. XV.

Sheweth the difference between Faiths conquest over the world, by quenching the fiery darts shot from it; and that victory which some of the better Heathens attained to. As also a tryal of our Faith propounded, by this power to quench Satans enticing temptations more or less.

Object. **B**ut some may say, if this be all faith enables to, this is no more than some Heathens have done. They have trampled on the profits, pleasures of this world, who never knew what faith meant.

Ans. Indeed many of them have done so much by their moral principles, as may make some (who would willingly pass for believers, asham'd) to be out-gone by them who shot in so weak a bow. Yet it will appear, that there is a victory of faith, which in the true believer out-shoots them more than their moral conquest doth the debauched conversations of looser Christians.

First, Faith quenches the lust of the heart, i. e. Those very embers of corruption, which are so secretly rak'd up in the inclination of the soul, find the force and power of faith to quench them. *Faith purifies the heart*, *Acts 15. 9.* Now, none of their

conquests reach the heart. Their longest ladder was too short to reach the walls of this Castle; They swept the door, trimm'd a few outward rooms; But the seat and sink of all (in the corruption of mans nature) was never cleansed by them: so that the fire of lust was rather pent in, than put out. How is it possible that could be cleansed, the filthiness of which was never known to them? Alas, they never look'd so near themselves to find that enemy within them, which they thought was without: Thus while they laboured to keep the thief out, he was within, and they knew it not; for they did either proudly think, that the soul was naturally endued with principles of virtue, or vainly imagine it to be but an *abrasa Tabula*, *white paper*, on which they might write good or evil as they pleased. Thus you see the seat of their war was in the world without them, which after some sort they conquer'd. But the lust within remain'd

remain'd untouch't, because a terra ^{inc}ognita to them. It is faith from the Word that first discovers this un-
found land.

Secondly, faiths victory is unform; Sin in Scripture is call'd a body, Rom. 6. 6. because made up of several members, or as the body of an Army; consisting of many Troops and Regiments; 'tis one thing to beat a troop, or put a wing of an Army to flight, and another thing to rout and break the whole Army. Something hath been done by moral principles, like the former; they have got some petty victory, and had the chase of some more gross, and exterior sins; but then they were fearfully beaten by some other of sins troops: When they seem'd to triumph over the lust of the flesh, and eye, the worlds profits and pleasures; they were at the same time slaves to the pride of life; meer *gloria animalia*, kept in chains by the credit and applause in the world. As the sea, (which they say) loses as much in one place in the Land, as it gains in another; so what they got in a seeming victory over one sin, they lost again by being in bondage to another, and that a worse, because more spiritual. But now faith is uniform, and routs the whole body of sin, that not one single lust stands in its unbroken strength. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace, Rom. 6. 14.* Sin shall not, that is, no sin; it may stir like a wounded souldier on his knees; they may rally like broken troops, but never be long master of the field where true faith is seen.

Thirdly, faith enables the soul, not only to quench these lusts; but the temptation being quench'd, it enables him to use the world it self against Satan, and so beat him with his own weapon, by striking his own cudgels to his head. Faith quenches the fire of Satans darts, and then shoots them back on him; This it doth, by reducing all the enjoyments of the world which the Christian is possessed of, into a serviceableness, and subordination for the glory of God. Some of the Heathens admired champions, to cure the lust of the eye, have (from a blind zeal) pluckt them out: To shew the contempt of riches, have thrown their money into the sea: To conquer the worlds honor and applause, have sequestred themselves from all company in the world. A preposterous way, that God never chalked. Shall we call it a victory, or rather a phrensie! The world by this time perceives their folly. But faith enables for a nobler conquest. Indeed, when God calls for any of these enjoyments, faith can lay all at Christs feet; but while God allows them, faiths skill and power is in sanctifying them; it corrects the windiness, and flatulent nature of them, so that, what on a naughty heart rots and corrupts, by faith turns to good nourishment in a gracious soul. If a house were on fire, which would you count the wiser man? he that goes to quench the fire by pulling the house down, or he, that by throwing good store of water on it, doth this as fully, and also leaves the house standing for your use? The Heathen and some superstitious Christians, think to mortifie, by taking away what God gives us leave to use, but faith puts out the fire of lust in the heart, and leaves the creature to be improv'd for Gods glory, and enjoy'd to the Christians comfort.

Use 1. This may be a touch-stone for our faith; whether of the right make or no; Is thy faith a temptation-quenching faith? Many say, they believe, yes that they do, they thank God they are not Infidels: Well, what exploits canst thou do with thy faith? Is it able to defend thee in a day of battel? and cover thy soul in safety, when Satans darts flie thick about thee? or is it such a sorry shield, that lets every arrow of temptation pierce thy heart thorow it? Thou believest, but still as very a slave to thy lust as ever; when a good fellow calls thee out to a drunken meeting, thy faith cannot keep thee out of the snare, but away thou goest, as a fool to the stocks. If Satan tells thee thou mayest advantage thy estate by a lye, or cheat in thy shop, thy faith stands very tamely by, and makes no resistance. In a word, thou hast faith, and yet drivest a trade of sin in the very face of it. O God forbid, that any should be under so great a spirit of delusion, to carry such a lye in their hand, and think it a saving faith. Will this faith ever carry thee to Heaven, that is not able to bring thee out of Hell? for there thou livest, while under the power of thy lust. *Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and come and stand before me? Je. 7. 1.* If this be faith, well fare the honest Heathens, who escap't these gross pollutions of the world, which you like beasts with your faith lie wallowing in. I had rather be a sober Heathen, than a drunken Christian; a chaste Heathen, than an unclean Believer. O venture not the life of your souls with such a paper-shield; come to him for a faith, that is the faith-maker, God I mean; he will help thee to a faith, that shall quench the very fire of Hell it self, though kindled in thy bosom, and divide the waves of thy lust, in which now thou art even drown'd (as once he did the sea for Israel) that thou shalt go on dry land to Heaven, and thy lusts not be able to knock off the wheels of thy chariot. But if thou attemptest this with thy false faith, the Egyptians end will be thine, *Heb. 11. 29. By faith they passed through the red sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assailing to do were drowned.* Though true faith gets safely through the depths of temptation, yet false faith will drown by the way. But perhaps thou canst tell us better news than this, and give us better evidence for the truth of thy faith, than so. Let us therefore hear what singular thing hath been done by thee since a believer. The time was, thou wert as weak as water; every puff of wind, blast of temptation blew thee down; thou wert carried as a dead fish with the stream; but canst thou say, since thou hast been acquainted with Christ, thou art endued with a power to repel those temptations, which before held thy heart in perfect obedience to their commands? Canst thou now be content to bring thy lusts, which once were of great price with thee (as those believers did their conjuring books, *Acts 19. 19.*) and throw them into the fire of Gods love in Christ to thy soul, there to consume them? Possibly thou hast not them at present under thy foot in a full conquest, yet have they begun to fall in thy thoughts of them, and is thy countenance changed towards them to what it was? be of good comfort, this is enough to prove thy faith of the royal race. *When Christ*

Christ comes (said the convinced Jews) will he do more miracles than these, which this man hath done, Joh. 7. 31.

And when Christ comes by faith into the heart, will he do greater works than these thy faith hath done?

CHAP. XVI.

An Objection against believing, answered: And some directions how to use this shield to quench enticing temptations.

Use 2. **T**His helps to answer that Objection, by which many poor souls are discouraged from believing, and closing with the promise. Oh, faith the tempted soul, ye bid me believe; alas, how dare I, when I cannot get victory of such a lust, and overcome such a temptation? what have such as I to do with a promise? See here (poor soul) this *Goliath* prostrated; Thou art not to believe because thou art victorious, but that thou mayest be victorious. The reason why thou art so worsted by the enemy, is for want of faith; *If you believe not, surely you shall not be established, Isa. 7. 2.* Wouldst thou be cured before thou goest to the Physician? that sounds harsh to thy own reason, and is as if thou shouldst say, thou wilt not go to the Physician, till thou hast no need of him. No, go and touch Christ by faith, that virtue may flow from him to thy soul; thou must not think to eat the fruit, before thou plantest the Tree. Victory over corruption is a sweet fruit; but sound growing only upon faiths branches. Satan does by thee, as *Saul* did by the *Israelites*; who weakened their hands in battel by keeping them fasting. Up and eat (Christian) a full meal on the promise; if thou wouldst find thy eyes enlightened, and thy hands strengthened for the combate with thy lusts. 'Tis one part of the doctrine of Devils, which we read of, *1 Tim. 4. To forbid meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.* But the grand doctrine of the Devil, which above all he would promote, is to keep poor trembling souls from feeding by faith on the Lord Jesus; as if Christ were some forbidden fruit; whereas God hath appointed him above all other, that he should be received with thanksgiving of all humble sinners. And therefore in the name of God I invite you to this feast; Oh, let not your souls (who see your need of Christ, and are pinched at your very heart for want of him) be lean from day to day, through your unbelief; But come eat, and your souls shall live. Never was child more welcome to his fathers table, than thou art to Christs; and that feast which stands on the Gospel-board.

Use 3. Make use of faith O ye Saints, as for other ends and purposes, so particularly for this, of quenching this kind of fiery darts. 'Tis not the having of a shield, but the holding and wielding of it, that defends the Christian. Let not Satan take thee with thy faith out of thy hand, as *David* did *Saul* in the cave, with his spear sticking in the ground, which should have been in his hand.

Quest. But how would you have me use my shield of faith for my defence against these fiery darts of Satans enticing temptations?

Ans. By faith engage God to come in to thy succour against them. Now, there are three engaging acts of faith, which will bind God (as we may so say with reverence) to help thee, because he binds himself to help such.

The first is the prayerful act of faith. Open thy case to God in prayer, and call in help from Heaven. As the Governour of the besieged Castle, would send a secret messenger to his General or Prince to let him know his state, and straits. The Apostle, *1 Jam. 4. 2. faith, Ye fight and war, yet you have not, because ye ask not.* Our victory must drop from Heaven if we have any; but it stays till prayer comes for it. Though God had a purpose to deliver *Israel* out of *Egypt*, yet no news of his coming, till the groans of his people rang in his ears. This gave heaven the alarm, *Exod. 2. 24. Their cry came up unto God, and he heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant.* Now, the more to prevail upon God in this act of faith, fortifie thy prayer with those strong reasons, which Saints have used in like cases; As, First, engage God from his promise, when thou prayest against any sin; shew God his own hand, in such promises as these; *Sin shall not have dominion over you, Rom. 6. He will subdue our iniquities under, Micah 7.* Prayer is nothing but the promise reversed, or Gods Word form'd into an argument, and retorted by faith upon God again. Know Christian, thou hast Law on thy side, bills and bonds must be paid, *Psal. 119. 36. David* is there praying against the sins of a wanton eye, and a dead heart, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way,* and see how he urgeth his argument in the next words, *stablish thy Word unto thy servant.* A good man is as good as his word, and will not a good God? but where finds *David* such a word for help against these sins? surely in the Covenant, 'tis in the *Magna Charta*. The first promise held forth thus much, *The seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head.* Secondly, plead with God from relation. Art thou one God hath taken into his family? Hast thou chosen God for thy God? Oh what an argument hast thou here! *I am thine, Lord save me, saith David.* Who will look after the child, if the Father will not? Is it for thy honour, O God, that any child of thine should be a slave to sin? Be merciful unto me, do thou usest to do unto those that love thy Name; Order my steps in thy Word, and let not any inquiry have dominion over me, *Psal. 119. 132.* Thirdly, engage God from his Sons bloody death to help thee against thy lusts, that were his murderers: What died Christ for, but to redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people? *Tit. 2. 14.*

And

And shall not Christ be re-imburst of what he laid out? Shall he not have the price of his blood, and purchase of his death? In a word, what is Christs praying for in Heaven, but what was in his mouth when praying on earth? That his Father would sanctifie them, and keep them from the evil of the world: Thou comest in a good time, to beg that of God, which thou findest Christ hath asked for thee.

Secondly, A second way to engage God, is by faiths expecting act; when thou hast been with God, expect good from God. *I will direct my prayer to thee, and will look up,* Psal. 5. 3. for want of this, many a prayer is lost. If you do not believe, why do you pray? And if you believe, why do you not expect? By praying you seem to depend on God; by not expecting, you again renounce your confidence, and ravel out your prayer; What is this, but to take his name in vain, and to play bo-peep with God? As if one that knocks at your door, should before you can come to open it to him, go away, and not stay to be spoke with. O Christians, stand to your prayer in a holy expectation of what you have begged, upon the credit of the promise, and you cannot mis of the ruine of your lusts.

Quest. O but faith the poor soul, shall not I presume to expect when I have prayed against my corruptions, that God will bestow so great a mercy on me as this is?

Ans. First, Doeſt know what it is to presume? He presumes that takes a thing before it is granted. He were a presumptuous man indeed, that should take your meat off your table, who never was invited: But I hope your guest is not over-bold, that ventures to eat of what you set before him. For one to break into your house, upon whom you shut the door, were presumptuous; but to come out of a storm into your house, when you are so kind as to call him in, is no presumption, but good manners. And, if God opens not the door of his promise to be a Sanctuary unto poor humbled sinners, flying from the rage of their lust; truly then I know none of this side Heaven, that can expect welcom. God hath promised to be a King, a Law-giver to his people; now 'tis no presumption in Subjects to come under their Princes shadow, and expect protection from them, *Iſa.* 33. 21, 22. God there promiseth, *he will be a place of broad waters and streams, wherein no Gally shall go with Oars, neither shall gallant Ships pass thereby. For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us.* God speaks to his people, as a Prince or a State would to their Subjects: He will secure them in their traffique and merchandize, from all Pirates and Pick-rooms; they shall have a free Trade: Now soul, thou art molested with many Pirat-lusts that infest thee, and obstruct thy commerce with Heaven; yea, thou hast complained to thy God, what loss thou hast suffered by them; is it now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear who is thy Leige-Lord?

Secondly, You have the Saints for your presidents: Who when they have been in combate with their corruptions, yea, been foiled by them, have

even then acted their faith on God, and expected the ruine of those enemies, which for the present have over-run them. *Iſal.* 65. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me* (he means his own sins, and others wrath) but see his faith; at the same time that they prevail'd over him, he beholds God destroying of them, (as appears in the very next word) *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* See here, poor Christian, who thinkest that thou shalt never get above deck. Holy David has a faith, not only for himself, but also all believers (of whose number I suppose thee one) *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away!* And mark the ground he hath for this his confidence, *vers.* 4. taken from Gods choosing act, *Blessed is the man whom thou choicest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts.* As if he had said, surely he will not let them be under the power of sin, or want of his gracious succour, whom he sets so nigh himself. This is Christs own argument against Satan in the behalf of his people. *The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee,* Zech. 3. 2.

Thirdly, Thou hast encouragement for this expecting act of faith, from what God already hath enabled thee to do. Thou canst (if a Believer indeed) through mercy say, that sin is not in that strength within thy soul, as it was before thy acquaintance with Christ, his Word and ways; Though thou art not what thou wouldst be; yet also, thou art not what thou hast been. There was a time, when sin plaid Rex in thy heart without controul. Thou didst go to sin as a ship to sea before wind and tyde. Thou didst dilate, and spread thy affections to receive the gale of temptation: But now the tyde is turned, and runs against those motions, though weakly (being but new flood) yet thou findest a secret wrestling with them, and God seasonably succouring thee; so that Satan hath not all his will on thee. Well, here is a sweet beginning, and let me tell thee, this promiseth thee a readines in God to perfect the victory; yea, God would have thy faith improve this into a confidence for a total deliverance. *Moses,* when he slew the Egyptian, *He supposed his brethren would have understood* (by that little hint and essay) *how that God would deliver them,* Acts 7. 25. O 'tis a bad improvement of the succours God gives us, to argue from them to unbelief; *He smote the rock; that the waters gushed out; but can he give bread also?* He broke my heart (faith the poor creature) when it was a rock, a flint; and brought me home, when I was walking in the pride of my heart against him; but can he give bread to nourish my weak grace? I am out of Egypt; but can he master those Giants in Iron Chariots that stand betwixt me and Canaan? He helpt me in such a temptation, but what shall I do the next bout? Oh, do not grieve a good God with these heart-aking questions. You have the former rain, why should you question the later? Benjamin was a good pawn, to make old Jacob willing to go himself to Egypt. The grace which God hath already enriched thee with, is a sure pledge that more is coming to it.

Thirdly, The expecting act of faith must produce

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duce another, an endeavouring act to set the soul on work, in the confidence of that succour it expects from God; when *Jehoshaphat* had prayed and stablished his faith on the good word of promise, then he takes the field, and marches out under this victorious banner against his enemies, *2 Chron. 20.* Go Christian, do as he did, and speed as he sped: What *David* gave in counsel to his Son *Solomon*, that give I to thee, *1 Chron. 22. 16.* *Arise, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee;* that faith which sets thee on work for God, against thy sins as his enemies, will undoubtedly set God on work for thee against them as thine; The *Lepers* in the Gospel were cured, not sitting still, but walking, *Luke 17. 14.* *It came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed.* They met their cure in an act of obedience to Christ's command; the promise saith, *Sin shall not have dominion over you;* the command bids, *mortifie your earthly members;* go thou, and make a valiant attempt against thy lusts, upon this Word of command, and in doing thy duty, thou shalt find the performance of the promise. The reason of so many fruitless complaints among Christians, concerning the power of their corruptions, lies in one of these two miscarriages; either they endeavour without acting faith on the promise, and such indeed go at their own peril; like those bold men, *Numb. 14. 40.* who *presumptuously went up the hill, to fight the Canaanites,* though *Moses* told them, the Lord

was not among them; this slighting the conduct of *Moses* their leader, as if they needed not his help to the victory, a clear resemblance of those who go in their own strength to resist their corruptions, and so fall before them; Or else they pretend to believe, but it is *otiosa fide*, their faith doth not set them on a vigorous endeavour. They use faith as an eye, but not as an hand; they look for victory to drop from heaven upon their heads, but do not fight to obtain it; this is a meer fiction, a fanciful faith; he that believes God for the event, believes him for the means also; if the Patient dare trust the Physician for his cure, he dare also follow his prescription in order to it; And therefore Christian sit not still, and say thy sins shall fall, but put thy self in array against them; God who hath promised thee victory, calls thee to thy arms, and means to use thy own hands in the battle, if ever thou gettest it: *Get thee up* (said the Lord to *Joshua*) *wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?* *Josh. 7. 10.* God liked the prayer and moan he made very well; but there was something else for him to do, besides praying and weeping, before the *Ammonites* could be overcome: And so there is for thee Christian with thy faith to do, besides praying and expecting thy lusts down, and that is searching narrowly into thy heart, whether there be not some neglect on thy part, as an *Achan*, for which thou art so worsted by sin, and fleest before the face of every temptation.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the second sort of temptations that are more affrighting, and how Faith quencheth these darts in particular temptations to Atheism, which is overcome not by reason, but by Faith.

HAVING thus dispatch'd the first kind of fiery darts; temptations, which are enticing and alluring; We now proceed to the second kind, such as are of an affrighting nature, by which Satan would dismay and dispirit the Christian; and my task is still the same, to shew the power of faith in quenching these fiery darts. Let then the point be this.

SECT. I.

Dott. That faith, and only faith, can quench the fiery darts of Satans affrighting temptation. This sort of fiery darts is our enemies reserve; when the other proves unsuccessful, then he opens this quiver, and sends a shower of these arrows to set the soul on flame, if not of sin, yet of terror and horror; when he cannot carry a soul laughing to hell, through the witchery of pleasing temptations, he'll endeavour to make him go mourning to Heaven, by amazing him with the other. And truly it is not the least support to a soul exercised with these temptations, to consider, they are a good sign, that Satan is hard put to it, when these arrows are upon his string. You know an enemy that keeps a Castle, will preserve it as long as he can hold it, but when he sees he must out, then he sets it on fire to render it if possible,

useless to them that come after him; while the strong man can keep his house under his own power, he labours to keep it in peace; he quenches those fire balls of conviction, that the spirit is often shooting into the conscience: But when he perceives it is no longer tenable, the mutiny within increases, and there is a secret whisper in the soul of yielding unto Christ; now he labours to set the soul on fire, by his affrighting temptations; Much more doth he labour to do it, when Christ hath got the Castle out of his hands, and keeps it by the power of his grace against him. 'Tis very observable, that all the darts shot against *Job*, were of this sort; he hardly made any use of the other, when God gave him leave to practise his skill; why did he not tempt him with some golden apple of profit, or pleasure, or such like enticing temptations? surely, the high testimony God gave to this his eminent Servant, discouraged Satan from this method; yea, no doubt, he had tried *Job's* manhood before this as to those, and found him too hard; so that now he had no other way left probable to attain his design but this.

I shall content my self with three instances of this sort of fiery darts, shewing how faith quenches them all. Temptations to Atheism, Blasphemy, and Despair.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The first is his temptation to *Atheism*, which for the horrid nature thereof, may well be called a *fiery dart*; partly, because by this he makes so bold an attempt, striking at the being of God himself; as also, because of the consternation he produceth in a gracious soul wounded with it; 'Tis true, the Devil who cannot himself turn Atheist, is much less able to make a child of God an Atheist, who hath not only in common with other men, an indelible stamp of a Deity in his Conscience, but such a sculpture of the divine nature in his heart, as irresistibly demonstrates a God; yea, lively represents a holy God, whose image it is; so that 'tis impossible a holy heart should be fully overcome with this temptation, having an argument beyond all the world of wicked men, and devils themselves ~~to~~ prove a Deity, viz. a new nature in him, *created after God in righteousness and true holiness*; by which, even when he is buffeted with Atheistical injections, he faith in his heart there is a God, though Satan in the *Paroxysm* of the temptation, clouds his reasoning faculty for the present with this smog of Hell, which doth more offend and affright, than persuade his gracious heart to espouse such a principle, as it doth in a wicked man; who when on the contrary he is urged by his conscience to believe on God, *faith in his heart there is no God*; that is, he wisheth there were none: And this may exceedingly comfort a Saint (who notwithstanding such injections to Atheism, clings about God in his affections, and dares not for a world allow himself to sin against him; no not when most oppressed with this temptation) that he shall not pass for an Atheist in Gods account, whatever Satan makes him believe: As the wicked shall not be cleared from Atheism by their naked profession of a Deity, so long as those thoughts of God are so loose and weak, as not to command them into any obedience to his commands, *Psal. 36. 1. The transgression of the wicked, faith in mine heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes*; The holy Prophet argues from the wickedness of the sinners life, to the Atheism of his heart; so on the contrary, the holy life of a gracious person, faith in mine heart, that the fear of God is before his eye: it appears plainly that he believes a God, and reveres that God whom he believes to be. Well, though a gracious heart can never be overcome, yet he may be sadly haunted and disquieted with it. Now in the next place I am to shew you, how the Christian may quench this *fiery dart*, and that is by faith alone.

Quest. But what need of faith? will not reason serve the turn, to stop the Devils mouth in this point? cannot the eye of reason spy a Deity, except it look through the Spectacles of faith?

Ans. I grant, that this is a piece of natural divinity, and reason is able to demonstrate the being of a God; where the Scriptures never came, a Deity is acknowledged, *Micah 4. 5. All people will walk, every one in the Name of his God*. Where it is supposed, that every Nation owns some Deity, and hath a worship for that God they own; yet in a

furious assault of temptation, 'tis faith alone, that is able to keep the field, and quench the fire of this dart.

First, That light which reason affords, is duskyish and confused, serving for little more than in general to shew there is a God; It will never tell, who, or what this God is. Till Paul brought the *Athenians* acquainted with the true God, how little of this first principle in Religion was known among them? though that City was then the very eye of the world for learning. And if the worlds eye was so dark, as not to know the God they worshiped; what then was the worlds darkness it self? those barbarous places, (I mean) which wanted all tillage and culture of humane literature, to advance and perfect their understandings. This is a Scripture-notion, and so is the object of faith, rather than reason. *Heb. 11. 6. He that comes to God, must believe that he is*; mark that, *he must believe*; now faith goes upon the credit of the Word, and takes all upon trust from its authority; *He must believe that he is*, which as Master Perkins on the place faith, is not nakedly to know there is a God, but to know God to be a God; which reason of it self can never do; such is the blindness and corruption of our nature, that we have very deformed and mishapen thoughts of him, till with the eye of faith, we see his face in the glass of the Word, and therefore the same learned man is not afraid to affirm, that all men, who ever came of Adam (Christ alone excepted) are by nature Atheists, because at the same time that they acknowledge a God, they deny him his power, presence, and justice, and allow him to be only what pleaseth themselves. Indeed it is natural for every man to desire to accommodate his lusts with such conceptions of God, as may be most favourable to, and suit best with them. God chargeth some for this, *Psal. 50. Thou thought'st I was altogether such as thy self*. Sinners doing with God as the *Enchiridians* with Angels, whom they picture with black faces that they may be like themselves.

Secondly, Suppose thou wert able by reason to demonstrate what God is, yet it were dangerous to enter the list, and dispute it out, by thy naked reason with Satan, who hath, though the worst cause, yet the nimbler head. There is more odds between thee and Satan (though the reason and understanding of many the ripest wits were met in thee,) than between the weakest idiot, and the greatest Scholar in the world. Now who would put a cause of so great importance to such a hazard, as thou must do, by reasoning the point with him, that so far out-matches thee? But there is a divine authority in the Word, which faith builds on, and this hath a throne in the conscience of the Devil himself; he flies at this: For which cause, Christ, though he was able by reason to have baffled the Devil, yet to give us a pattern, what arms to use for our defence in our conflicts with Satan, he repels him only by lifting up the shield of the Word. *It is written*; faith Christ, *Luke 4. 4.* and again, *vers. 8. It is written*. And it is very observable, how powerful the Word quoted by Christ was to *nonplus* the Devil; so, that he had not a word to reply to any Scripture that was brought, but was

taken off upon the very mention of the Word, and forced to go to another argument: Had *Eve* but stood to her first answer, *God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, Gen. 3. 3.* She had been too hard for the Devil; but letting her hand hold go, which she had by faith on the Word, presently she fell into her enemies hand. Thus in this particular, when the Christian in the heat of temptation, by faith stands upon his defence, interposing the Word between him and Satans blows; I believe that God is, though I cannot comprehend his nature, nor answer thy sophistry; yet I believe the report the Word makes of God; Satan may trouble such a one, but he cannot hurt him; nay, 'tis probable he will not long trouble him; The Devils antipathy is so great to the Word, that he loves not to hear it sound in his ear; but if thou throwest down the shield of the Word, and thinkest by the dint or force of thy reason to cut thy way through the temptation, thou maiest soon see thy self surrounded by thy subtle enemy, and put beyond an honourable retreat; This is the reason I conceive, why among those few which have professed themselves Atheists, most of them have been great pretenders to reason, such as have neglected the Word, and gone forth in the pride of their own understanding, by which (through the righteous judgement of God) they at last have disputed themselves into flat Atheism; while they have turned their back upon God and his Word, thought by digging into the secrets and bowels of nature, to be admired for their knowledge above others, that hath befallen them, which sometimes doth those in Mines, that delve too far into the bowels of the Earth; a damp from Gods secret judgement hath come, to put out that light which at first they carried down with them; and so that of the *Apostle* is verified on them, *Where is the disputer of the world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 1 Cor. 1. 21.* Indeed, 'tis the wisdom of God, that the world by wisdom (their own trusted to) should not know God.

Thirdly, he that assents to this truth, that there is a God, merely upon grounds of reason, and not of faith, and rests in that, he doth not quench the

temptation, for still he is an Infidel, and a Scripture Atheist; he doth not believe there is a God at the report of Gods Word, but at the report of his Reason, and so indeed he doth but believe himself, and not God, and in that makes himself a God, preferring the testimony of his own reason before the testimony of Gods Word, which is dangerous.

Quest. But may some say, is there no use of reason in such principles as this, which are within its sphere? May I make use of my reason to confirm me in this truth, that there is a God?

Ans. 'Tis beyond all doubt that there is, wherefore else did God set up such a light, if not to guide us? but it must keep its place, and that is to follow faith, not to be the ground of it, or to give Law and measure to it. Our faith must not depend on our reason, but our reason on our faith. I am not to believe what the Word saith, merely because it jumps with my reason, but believe my reason, because 'tis suitable to the Word: The more perfect light is to rule the less; now the light of the Word which faith follows, is more clear and sure than reason is, or can be; for therefore it was written, because mans natural light was so defective; thou readest in the Word there is a God, and that he made the world; the eye of Reason sees this also, but thou layest the stress of thy faith on the Word, not on thy Reason; and so of other truths; The Carpenter lays his rule to the timber, and by his eye sees it to be right or crooked; yet it is not the eye but the rule that is the measure, without which his eye might fail him. All that I shall say more to such as are annoyed with Atheistical injections, is this; fix thy faith strongly on the Word, by which thou shalt be able to overcome this *Goliath*; and when thou art more free, and composed, and the storm is over, thou shalt do well to back thy faith what thou canst with thy reason; let the Word (like *Davids stone*) in the sling of faith, first prostrate the temptation, and then, as he used *Goliaths* sword to cut off his Head, so maiest thou, with more ease and safety make use of thy Reason to compleat the Victory over these Atheistical suggestions.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of temptations to blasphemy, and how faith quencherh them, and defeats Satans double design.

THE second fiery Dart, with which he affrights the Christian, is his temptation to blasphemy. Every sin in a large sense is blasphemy; but here we take it more strictly. When a man does, speaks, or thinks any thing derogatory to the holy Nature or Works of God, with an intent to reproach him or his ways; This properly is blasphemy. *Job's Wife* was the Devils Solicitor, to provoke her Husband to this sin; *Curse God, (saith she) and dye;* The Devil was so impudent, to assault Christ himself with this sin, when he bade him, *Fall down and worship him;* but he hath an advantage of making a hearer approach to a Saint than he had to Christ. All that he could do to him, was to offend his holy ear with an

external motion. It would not stand with the dignity or holiness of Christs Person, to let him come any further; but he can shoot this fiery dart into the imagination of a Saint, to the great disturbance of his thoughts, endeavouring thereby to stir up some unworthy thoughts of God in him; Though these commonly are no more welcome to a gracious soul, than the Frogs which crept into the Bed-chamber of *Pharaoh*, were to him. Two things Satan aims at by these injections: First, to set the Saint a defaming God; which he loves a life to hear; but if this fails, then, Secondly, he is content to play at lower game, and intends the Christians vexation, by forcing these unwelcome guests upon him: Now faith, and only faith

faith can only quench these fire-balls in both respects.

First, Faith is able to defeat Satans first plot, by keeping the soul from entertaining any unbecoming or blasphemous thoughts of God, and none but faith can do this. There is a natural disposition in every wicked man to blaspheme God. Let God but cross a carnal wretch in his way, and then suffer Satan to edge his corruption, and he will soon flie in Gods face; If the Devils supposition had been true (as it was indeed, most false) that *Job* was an Hypocrite; then the tale which he brought against him to God, would have been true also: *Put forth now thy hand, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face*; *Job* 1. 11. Had *Job* been the man he took him for, the Devil had not lyed; because 'tis natural to every wicked man, to have base thoughts of God; and when provoked, the inward rancour of his heart, will appear in the foulness of his tongue: *This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. 33. A loud blasphemy, the seed of which is found in every unbeliever. There is but one spirit of wickedness in sinners, as but one Spirit of Grace in Saints. *Peter* tells *Simon Magus*, *He was in the gall of bitterness*, Acts 8. 23. That is, in a state of sin: every unbeliever is of a bitter spirit against God, and all that bears his Name; there's no trusting of the tamelest of them all, though coupd up by restraining grace: Let the Lyon out of his Grate, and he will soon shew his bloody nature. An unbeliever hath no more in him to quench such a temptation, than dry wood hath to quench the fire that is put to it. But, now let us see what exploits faith can do in quenching this fiery dart, and how faith does it.

First, Faith sets God before the soul, within sight and hearing of all its thoughts and wayes, and thus keeps the soul in awe, that it dares harbour nothing unworthy of God in its most secret thoughts. *David* gives the reason why the wicked are so bold, *Psalm* 86. 14. *They have not set thee before them*, Such as defame and asperse the names of others, do it commonly behind their backs: Sin in this life seldom comes to such a ripeness, as to blaspheme God to his face; this is properly the language of Hell. There is a mixture of Atheism, with the blasphemy of sinners while on Earth: They do with God, as those wretched Miscreants did with Christ, they cover his face, and then smite him: they draw a Curtain by some Atheistical principles betwixt God and them, and then they belch out their blasphemies against that God, whose Omiscience they do not believe. Now faith eyes God eying the soul, and so preserves it. *Curse not the King* (saith *Solomon*) *nor in thy thought, nor the rich in thy bed-chamber, for a bird of the air shall carry the voyce, and that which hath wings, shall tell the matter*, Eccl. 10. 20. Such kind of language faith useth. Blaspheme not (saith faith) O my soul, the God of Heaven; thou canst not whisper it so softly, but the voyce is heard in his ear, who is nearer to thee, than thou to thy self; and thus it breaks the snare the Devil layes. Those unbecoming speeches which dropt from *Job's* mouth, through the length and extremity of his trou-

bles, though they did not amount to blasphemy, yet when God presented himself to him in his Majesty, they soon vanished; and he covered his face with shame before the Lord for them; *Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes*, *Job* 42. 5, 6.

Secondly, Faith credits no report of God, but from Gods own mouth; and thus it quencheth temptations to blasphemy. 'Tis impossible a soul should have any but holy and loyal thoughts of God, who shapes his apprehension of him by the Word of God, which is the only true glass to behold God in, because it alone presents him like himself in all his Attributes, which Satan by this sin of blasphemy one way or other asperes. Faith conceives its notions of God by the Word, resolves all cases of Conscience, and deciphers all Providences (which God writes in mysterious figures) by the Word; for want of which skill, Satan drives the creature very oft to have hard thoughts of God, because he cannot make presently good sense of his administrations in the world. Thus there have been, who foolishly have charged Gods Justice, because some outrageous sinners have not been overtaken with such speedy judgement, as they deserve; others have charg'd as deeply his care and faithfulness, in providing no better for his servants, whom they have seen kept long under the hatches of great afflictions; like him, that seeing a company of Christians in poor ragged cloaths, said, He would not serve that God, who kept his Servants no better. These, and such like, are the broken glasses that Satan presents God in, that he may disfigure him to the creatures eye; and truly, if we will look no further, but judge God to be, what he appears to be by them, we shall soon condemn the Holy one, and be within the whirl of this dangerous temptation.

Thirdly, Faith quencheth temptations to blasphemy as it is praiseful. It disposeth the Christian, to bless God in the saddest condition that can befall it. Now these two, blessing and blasphemy are most contrary; By the one we think and speak evil, and by the other, good of God; and therefore cannot well dwell under the same Roof: They are like contrary Tunes; they cannot be plaid on the same instrument, without changing all the strings. It is past Satans skill to strike so harsh a stroke as blasphemy is, on a soul tuned and set to praise God; Now faith doth this. *My heart is fixed* (saith *David*) there was his faith, then follows, *I will sing and give praise*, *Psalm* 57. 7. It was faith that tuned his spirit, and set his affections praise-way. And would not Satan (think you) have found it a hard task to have made *David* blaspheme God, while his heart was kept in a praising frame? Now two ways faith doth this. First, As it spies mercy in the greatest affliction, an eye of white in the saddest mixture of Providence; so that when the Devil provokes to blasphemy from the evil that the creature receives from God, faith shews more good received than evil; Thus *Job* quenched this Dart, which Satan shot at him from his Wives tongue: *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil? Shall a few present troubles be a Grave to bury the remem-*

remembrance of all my past and present mercies? *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women*: What God takes from me is less than I owe him; but what he leaves me is more than he owes me. Solomon bids us, *In the day of adversity consider*, Eccl. 7. 14. Our unbecoming thoughts and words of God, are the product of a rash hasty spirit. Now faith is a considering grace; *He that believes will not make haste*, no not to think or speak of God. Faith hath a good memory, and can tell the Christian many stories of ancient mercies; and when his present meal falls short, it can entertain the soul with a cold dish, and not complain that God keeps a bad House neither. Thus *David* recovered himself, when he was even tumbling down the Hill of temptation. *This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High, I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old*, Psal. 77. 10, 11. Therefore Christian, when thou art in thy depths of affliction, and Satan tempts thee to asperse God, as if he were forgetful of thee, stop his mouth with this, *No Satan, God hath not forgot to do for me, but I have forgot what he hath done for me, or else I could not question his fatherly care at present over me*; Go Christian, play over thy old Lessons, praise God for past mercies, and it will not be long before thou hast a new Song put into thy mouth for present mercy. Secondly, As faith spies mercy in every affliction, so it keeps up an expectation in the Soul for more mercy; which confidence disposeth the Soul to praise God for, as if the mercy were then in being. *Daniel*, when in the very shadow of death, the plot laid to take away his life, *Three times a day he prayed, and gave thanks before his God*. To have heard him pray in that great strait, would not have afforded so much matter of wonder; but to have his heart in tune for thanksgiving in such a sad hour, this was admirable; and his faith enabled him, *Dan. 6. 10.* Mercy in the promise, is as the Apple in the feed; faith sees it growing up, the mercy a coming. Now a Soul under expectation of deliverance, how will it scorn a blasphemous motion? When relief is known to be on its way for a Garrison besieged, it raiseth their spirits; they will not then hearken to the traitorous motion of the enemy. 'Tis when unbelief is the Counsellor, and the Soul under doubts and suspicions of Gods heart to it, that Satan finds welcome upon such an Errand, an excellent instance for both we have in one Chapter, Isa. 8. We find, *vers. 17.* what is the effect of faith, and that is a cheerful waiting on God in straits. *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him*, and *vers. 21.* We have the fruit of unbelief, and that is no less than blasphemy: *And it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King, and their God, and look upward.* Faith keeps the Believer in a waiting posture; and unbelief sets the sinner a cursing both God and man. None escapes his lash, that crosseth him in his way, no not God himself.

Fourthly, Faith quenches this fiery dart, by purifying his heart of that enmity against God, which in mans corrupt nature is fuel for such a temptation.

Back biters, haters of God, and despightful, are joyned together, Rom. 1. 30. No wonder that a man whose spirit is full of rancour against another, should be easily perswaded to revile him he hates so much. Every unbeliever is a hater of God, and so is in a disposition to blaspheme God, when his will or lust is crossed by God. But faith slays this enmity of the heart, yea, it works love in the soul to God, and then works by this love. Now it is one property of love, *To think no evil*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. That is, a man will neither plot any evil against him he loves; nor easily suspect any evil to be plotted by him against himself. Love reads the actions of a friend through such clear Spectacles of candour and ingenuity, as will make a dark Print seem a fair Character; It interprets all he doth, with so much sweetness and simplicity, that those passages in his behaviour towards her, which, to another would seem intricate and suspicious, are plain and pleasing to her; because she ever puts the most favourable sense upon all he doth that is possible. The Believer dares not himself plot any evil of sin against God, whom (from the Report that faith hath made of him to his soul) he loves so dearly. And as love will not suffer him to turn Traytor against a good God, so neither will it suffer him to harbour any jealous thoughts of Gods heart towards him; as if he, who was the first lover, and taught the soul to love him, by making love to her, could after all this, frame any plot of real unkindness against it. No, this thought, though Satan may force it in a manner upon the Christian, and violently press for its entertainment, under the advantage of some frowning Providence (which seems to countenance such a suspicion) yet it can never find welcom, so far as to be credited in the soul, where love to God hath any thing to do. And surely there is no fear, that soul will be perswaded wickedly to belch out blasphemies against God, who so abominates but the surmising the least suspicion of God in her most secret thoughts.

2. The second design Satan hath in these blasphemous temptations, is the Christians trouble and vexation. Though he doth not find the Christian so kind, as to take these his Guests in, and give them lodging for his sake, yet he knows, it will not a little disturb and break his rest, to have them continually knocking and rapping at his door; yea, when he cannot pollute the Christian by obtaining his consent to them; even then he hopes to create him no little disquiet and distraction, by accusing him for what he will not commit; and so of a defiler (which rather he would have been) he is forced to turn slanderous Reviler and false Accuser. Thus the whore sometimes accuseth the honest man, merely to be revenged on him, because he will not yield to satisfy her lust: *Joseph* would not lie with his *Mistress*, and she raiseth a horrible lie on him. The Devil is the Blasphemer, but the poor Christian (because he will not joyn with him in the Fact) shall have the name, and bear the blame of it. As the *Jews* compelled *Simon of Cyrene* to carry Christs Crosse, so Satan would compel the tempted Christian, to carry the guilt of his sin for him. And many times he doth so handsomely, and with such slight of hand shift it from himself to the Christians

Christians back, that he poor creature, perceives not the Juglers Art of conveying in unto him, but goes complaining only of the baseness of his own heart. And as it sometimes so falls out, that a true man, in whose House stolen goods are found, suffers, because he cannot find out the Thief that left them there: so the Christian suffers many sad terrors from the meer presence of these horrid thoughts in his bosom, because he is not able to say, whose they are; whether shot in by Satan, or the steaming forth of his own naughty heart. The humble Christian is prone to fear the worst of himself, even where he is not conscious to himself. Like the *Patriarchs*, who when the Cup was found in *Benjamin's* sack, took the blame to themselves, though they were innocent in the fact. And such is the confusion sometimes in the Christians thoughts, that he is ready to charge himself with those brats, that should be laid at another door, Satans, I mean. Now here I shall shew you how faith defeateth this second design of the Devil in these blasphemous motions. And this it doth two ways. First, by helping the Christian to discern Satans injections from the motions of his own heart. Secondly, by succouring him, though they rise of out his own heart.

First, Faith teaches the Christian to discern, and distinguish those fire-balls of temptations, which are thrown in at his window by Satan; from those sparks of corruption, which flie from his own heart, and take fire at his own sinful heart. And certainly, those blasphemous thoughts, of which many gracious Souls make such sad complaint, will be found very often of the former sort, as may the more probably appear, if we consider, the time when they first stir and are most busie; the manner how they come; and lastly, the effect they have on the Christians heart.

First, The time when they begin to stir, and the Soul to be haunted with them; and that is ordinarily, when the work of conversion hath newly passed, or is passing upon him; when the creature falls off from his old sinful course, to embrace Christ, and declares for him against sin and Satan; This is the time when these blasphemous suggestions begin to make their apparition, and these vermin are seen to crawl in the Christians bosom; a strong probability that they do not breed there, but are sent from Satan by way of Revenge for the Souls Revolt from him. The Devil dealing by the Christian in this, not much unlike to what his own sworn Servants (Witches I mean) are known to do, who to express their spight against those that cross them, sometimes cause them to swarm with Lice, or such kind of vermin, to make them loathsome to themselves; And as one that never found such vermin crawling about him before, might well wonder to see himself so suddenly stocked with a multitude of them; yea, might rather impute it to the Witches malice, than to the corruption of his own body that bred them: so in this case. Indeed 'tis very improbable to think, that the creature should in this juncture of time above all, fall so foul with God by sinning against him, at such a height as this; is it likely, that he can, while he is in tears for the sins of his past life, commit a greater than any of

them he mourns for? Or, that he dare, while he is crying for pardoning mercy with a trembling heart, block up the way to his own prayers, and harden Gods heart into a denial of them, by such horrid sins as these are? In a word, seems it not strange, that all the while he was a stranger to, yea, an Enemy against God, he durst not venture on this sin for the prodigious nature of it, and that now he begins to love God, those blasphemies should fit his mouth, which were too big and horrid before for him to meddle with.

Secondly, The manner how these blasphemies rise in the Christians thoughts, will encrease the probability, that they are injections from Satan without, rather than motions of the Christians own heart within. They are commonly violent and sudden; they come like lightning, flashing into the Christians thoughts before he hath time to deliberate with himself what he is doing; whereas that lust, which is the ebullition of our own hearts, is ordinarily gradual in its motion; it moves in a way more still and suitable to mans nature; it doth intice the Soul, and by degrees slightly enveagles it into a consent, making first the affections on its side, which then it employeth to corrupt the understanding, and take it off from appearing against it (by putting its eye out with some bribe of sensual pleasure and profit) and so, by these paces it comes at last to have a more easie access to, and success over the will; which being now deprived of her Guard, yields the looser to the Summons that lust makes. But these sudden dartings of blasphemous thoughts, they make a forcible entry upon the Soul, without any application used to gain its good will to come in; their driving is like the driving of that hellish *Jehu*, it is the Devil that is got into the Box, who else could drive so furiously? yea, not only their suddenness and violence, but incoherence with the Christians former thoughts and course, do still heighten the probability, that they are darts shot from the Devils bow. *Peter* was once known to be of Christs company by his voice: *Thy speech* (say they) *bewrayeth thee*; he spake like them, therefore was judged one of them; on the contrary, we may say of these blasphemous motions, They are not the Christians; their language bewrays them to be rather the belching of a Devil, than the voyce of a Saint. If they were woven by the soul, they would be something like the whole piece, from which they are cut off. There is ordinarily a dependency in our thoughts, we take the hint from one thought for another; as Circle riseth out of Circle in the moved water, so doth a thought out of thought, till they spread into a Discourse. Now, may not the Christian well wonder to see, may be when he is at the worship of God, and taken up with Holy and Heavenly Meditations, a blasphemous thought on a sudden appear in the midst of such company, to which it is so great a stranger? and also how it should get in among them? if a holy thought surprizeth us on a sudden, when we stand as it were with our back on Heaven, and there be nothing in the Discourse our hearts at present are holding, to usher it in, we may take it as a pure motion of the Spirit of Christ; who indeed but he, could be so soon in the midst of the Soul, when the door is shut, even before the creature can turn his thoughts to open

open it for him? And probably these blasphemies which rush upon thee, O Christian, at a time, when thy Soul is at the farthest distance from such thoughts, yea, failing to the clean contrary point, in thy praying to, and praising of God, are the interruptions of that wicked one, and that on purpose to interrupt thee in that work, which of all other he fears and hates most.

Thirdly, The effect these blasphemous motions have on the heart, may make us think they are Satans brats, rather than the birth of the Christians own heart: And that is a dismal horror and consternation of the Christians spirit, which reacheth often to the discomposure of the body. So that an apparition of the Devil to their bodily eyes, could not affright them more, than these blasphemies do, that walk in their imagination. Yea, they do not only cause an horror, but stir up a vehement indignation and abhorrency in the soul at their presence. If now they be the birth of the Christians own heart, why this horror? whence this indignation? those motions which arise from our selves, use to please us better. It is natural for men to love the children of their own loins, though black and deformed; and as natural, to like the conceptions of their own minds. *Solomon* found out the true mother, by her tenderneſs to the child. If these blasphemies were the issue of the heart, familiarity with them might be expected, rather than horror at the sight of them; favour to them, rather than abhorrency of them; were it not more likely (poor soul) that thou wouldst kiss them (if thy own) than seek to kill them? draw out thy breast to nurse and suckle them, than the Sword of the Spirit to destroy them? And if so (faith faith) that these be Satans brats, why then art thou troubled because he lays them at thy door? Is the chaste Woman the more Whore, because some foul tongue calls her so? Have patience a little poor soul, the Judge is at the door, and when he comes, thou shalt be called by thy right name. Sit not thou any longer wounding thy soul with his dart, and troubling thy self for the Devils sin, but go and complain of him to thy God: And when thou hast spread his blasphemies before the Lord, as *H Ezekiel* did *Rabshakehs*; comfort thy self with this, that God will spread thy cause against this false accuser, and send him away with as much shame, and as little success, as he did that barking Dog, who so reviled God, and railed on his people.

But secondly, suppose these blasphemous motions, be the Christians own sins, bred in his own heart, and not the Devils brats falsely fathered on him; yet here faith relieves the Christian, when distressed with the guilt of them, and Satan labours most to aggravate them. Now the succour faith brings the soul here, is manifold.

First, Faith can assure the soul upon solid Scripture-bottom, that these blasphemous thoughts are pardonable, *Mat. 12. 31.* *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* And it were strange, if thy fancy should be so wild and melancholy, as to think thou seest this only unpardonable blasphemy (which is ever markt on the forehead

with final impenitency and desperate hatred against God) in those loose roving thoughts, that never yet could gain any consent from thy heart to them, but continues to disavow, and protest against them. I say it were very strange that thou couldst long mistake those unwelcome guests for that wicked sin. Now for thy comfort, thou hearest all manner of blasphemy besides that one, shall be forgiven; a pardon for them may be sued out in the Court of mercy, how terrible and amazing soever their circumstances are to thy trembling Soul, and if the creature believes this, Satans dart is quenched; for his design is to make use of these temptations as a trap-door, by which he may let thy Soul down into despair.

Secondly, Faith resolves the Soul, that the ebullition of such thoughts is not inconsistent with the state of grace; and if the Soul be well satisfied in this point, the Devils fiery dart hath lost its envenomed Head, which uses so much to drink up the Christians spirits. The common inference which he makes tempted Souls draw from the presence of these thoughts in them, is, surely I am not a Saint; This is not the spot of Gods children; but faith is able to disprove this, and challenges Satan to shew (as well read as he is in the Scriptures) one place in all the Bible, that countenanceth such a conclusion. Indeed there is none. It is true, the blasphemy of blasphemies (I mean the sin against the Holy Ghost) with this the evil one shall never touch a true Believer; but I know no kind of sin, short of that, from which he hath any such protection, or immunity, as makes it impossible he should for a time be foyled by it. The whole body of sin indeed is weakened in every believer, and a deadly wound given by the grace of God to his corrupt nature, which it shall never claw off, but at last dye by it. Yet as a dying Tree may bear some fruit, though not so much, nor that so full, and ripe, as before; as a dying man may move his limbs, though not so strongly as when he was in health; so original corruption in a Saint will be stirring, though but feebly; and shewing its fruit, though it be but crumpled and unripe; and thou hast no cause to be discouraged, that it stirs; but to be comforted that it can but stir. O be thankful thou hast got thy Enemy, who even now was Master of the field, and had thee tyed to his triumphant Chariot, now himself on his knees, under the victorious Sword of Christ and his grace, ready to drop into his Grave, though lifting up his hand against thee to shew his enmity continues, when his power fails to do execution as he would.

Thirdly, Faith can clear it to the Soul, that these blasphemous thoughts, as they are commonly entertained in a Saint, are not so great sins in Gods account, as some other, that pass for less in our account. The Christian commonly contracts more guilt, by a few proud, unclean, covetous thoughts, than by many blasphemous; because the Christian seldom gets so clear a Victory over those, as over these of blasphemy. The fiery darts of blasphemy may scare the Christian more, but fiery lusts wound sooner and deeper. It was the warm Sun made the Traveller open his Cloak, which the blustering wind made wrap closer to him. Temptations of pleasure entice the heart to them; whereas the horrid nature of the other,

other, stirs up the Christian to a more valiant resistance of them. O the Christian is soon overtaken with these, they are like poyson in sweet wine, they are down before he is aware, and do diffuse apace into his affections, poysoning the Christians spirits; but these of blasphemy are like poyson in some bitter potion, either it is spit out before it is down, or vomited up by the Christian before it hath spread it self far into his affections. Sins are great or small, by the share the will hath in the acting of them, and blasphemous thoughts commonly having less of the Christians will and affections in them, than the other, cannot be a greater sin.

Fourthly, Faith tells the Soul that God may have, yea, undoubtedly hath gracious ends in suffering him to be haunted with such troublesome Guests, or else they should not be sent to quarter on him. Possibly, God saw some other sin thou wert in great danger of, and he sends Satan to trouble thee with these temptations, that he may not overcome thee in the other. And though a plaister or poultice be very offensive, and loathsome, yet better endure that a while, than a disease, which will hazard thy life. Better tremble at the sight of blasphemous thoughts, than strut thy self in the pride of thy heart at the sight of

thy gifts and priviledges. The first will make thee think thy self as vile as the Devil himself in thy own eyes; but the other will make thee prodigiously wicked; and so indeed like the Devil in Gods eyes.

Faith will put the Christian on some noble exploits for God, thereby to vindicate himself, and prove the Devils charge a lye; as one that is accused for some trayterous design against his Prince, to wipe off that calumny, doth undertake some notable enterprize for the honour of his Prince. This indeed is the fullest revenge the Christian can take, either of Satan for troubling him with such injections, or his own heart for issuing out such impure streams. When David prefer'd Saul's life in the Cave above a Kingdom, which one hearty blow might have procured him, he proved all his Enemies liars that had brought him under a suspicion at Court; Thus Christian, do thou by the honour of God, when it cometh in competition with sin and self, and thou wilt stop the Devils mouth, who sometimes is ready to make thee jealous of thy self, as if thou wert a blasphemer. Such heroic acts of zeal and self-denial, would speak more for thy purgation before God and thy own Conscience, than these sudden thoughts can do against thee.

CHAP. XIX.

The third fiery Dart of Despair, and the chief argument which Satan urgeth most upon souls to drive them into it (taken from the greatness of sin) refelled, as also the first answer with which Faith furnisheth the soul for this purpose.

THirdly, The third fiery dart which Satan lets flie at the Christian, is, his temptation to despair. This cursed Fiend thinks he can neither revenge himself further on God, nor engrave his own image deeper on the creature, than by this sin; which at once casteth the greatest scorn upon God, and brings the creature nearest the complexion of Devils and damned Souls; who by lying continually under the scorching wrath of God, in Hells torrid zone, are black'd all over with despair. This is the sin, that of all Satan chiefly aims at; other sins are but as previous dispositions to introduce that, and make the creature more receptive for such a temptation. As the wooll hath a tincture of some lighter colours given it, before it can be dyed into a deep grain; so Satan hath his more light some and pleasant sins, which he at first entices to, that he may the better dispose the creature to this; but this is kept by him as a great secret from the creatures knowledge. The Devil is too cunning a fowler, to lay his net in the Birds sight he means to take; despair is the net, other sins are but the shrapp, whereby he covers it, and so flatters them into it; which done, he hath them safe to eternity. This above all sins, puts a man into a kind of actual possession of Hell. Other sins bind over to wrath, but this gives fire to the threatening, and sets the soul on a light flame with horror. As it is faiths excellency to give a being to the word of promise; so it is the cruelty of

despair, that it gives an existence to the torments of Hell in the Conscience. This is the Arrow that drinks up the spirit, and makes the creature Executioner to it self. Despair puts a soul beyond all Relief; the offer of a pardon comes too late to him that hath turn'd himself off the Ladder. Other temptations have their way to escape; faith and hope can open a window to let out the smoke that offends the Christian in any condition, be it at present never so sad and sorrowful; but then the Soul must needs be choaked, when it is shut up within the despairing thoughts of its own sins, and no crevice of hope left, to be an out-let to any of that horror with which they fill him.

SECT. I.

I might here instance in those many *Media's* or Arguments Satan useth to dispute Souls into despair from, and how able faith, and only faith is, to answer and refell them; but I shall content my self with one to dilate upon; which is the chief of all Satans strength, and that is taken from the greatness and multitude of the creatures sins; which when it is enlightned to see, and hath the brawniness of its Conscience pared off, to feel with remorse, and then, God do but allow Satan to use his Rhetorick in declaiming against the hainousness of them; the poor creature must needs be in a doleful condition, and of necessity sink into

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the depths of despair, for all the help it can find from it self within, or any other creature without doors. Perhaps some of you (who have sleighty thoughts of your own sins) think it proves but a childish impotent spirit in others, to be so troubled for theirs; and in this you shew that you never were in Satans stocks, pinched by his temptations; those who have, will speak in another language, and tell you, that the sins which are unfelt by you, have lain like a Mountain of Lead upon their spirits. O, when a breach is once made in the conscience, and the waves of guilt pour in amain upon the Soul, it soon overtops all the creatures shifts and apologies, as the flood did the old world, that covered the tallest Trees and highest Mountains: As nothing then was visible but Sea and Heaven; so in such a Soul, nothing but sin and Hell; his sins stare him in the face, as with the eyes of so many Devils, ready to drag him into the bottomless Pit; every silly Flie dares creep upon the Lyon while asleep; whose voyce all the Beasts in the Forest tremble at, when he awakes. Fools can make a mock of sin, when consciences eye is out, or shut, they can then dance about it, as the *Philistines* about blind *Samson*; but when God arms sin with guilt, and causeth this Serpent to put forth his sting upon the conscience, then the proudest sinner of them all flie before it. Now it is faith that alone can grapple with sin in its strength, which it doth several ways.

S E C T. I I.

First, Faith gives the Soul a view of the great God. It teacheth the Soul to set his Almightyness against sins magnitude, and his infinitude against sins multitude; and so quencheth the temptation. The Reason why the presumptuous sinner fears so little, and the despairing Soul so much, is for want of knowing God as great; therefore to cure them both, the serious consideration of God under this notion is propounded, *Psal. 46. 10. Be still, and know that I am God*: As if he had said, Know, O ye wicked, that I am God, who can avenge my self when I please, upon you, and cease to provoke me by your sins to your own confusion. Again, Know ye trembling Souls, *that I am God*, and therefore able to pardon the greatest sins, and cease to dishonour me by your unbelieving thoughts of me. Now faith alone can thus shew God to be God. Two things are required to the right conceiving of God. *First*, We must give him the infinitude of all his Attributes, that is, conceive of him not only as wise, for that may be a mans name, but infinitely wise; not mighty, but Almighty, &c.

Secondly, This infinitude which we give to God, we must deny to all besides him, what, or whatsoever they be. Now faith alone can realize and fix this principle so in the heart, that the creature shall act suitably thereunto; indeed none so wicked, who will not say, (if you will believe them) that they believe God is infinite in his knowledge, and Omnipresent, at their heels, whereever they go: Infinite in his power, needing no more to effect their ruine, than his speaking it; but would they then in the view of these, go and sin so boldly? They durst as well run their heads

into a fiery Oven, as do it in the face of such a principle. So others, they believe God is infinite in mercy, but, would they then carry a Hell flaming in their bosoms with despair, while they have infinite mercy in their eye? No, 'tis plain, God appears not in his true greatness to such. Despair robs God in his infinitude, and ascribes it to sin; By it the creature faith, his sin is infinite, and God is not; too like those unbelieving *Israelites*, *Psal. 106. 7. They remembered not the multitude of his mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even at the red sea*; they could not see enough in God to serve their turn at such a strait; they saw a multitude of *Egyptians* to kill, and multitude of waters to drown them, but could not see multitude enough of mercies to deliver them. Thus the despairing soul sees multitude of great sins to damn, but not an infinitude of mercy in the great God to save him. Reason alas, is low of stature, like *Zaccheus*, and cannot see mercy in a crowd and press of sins; 'Tis faith alone that climbs the Promise; then, and not till then will the Soul see *Jesus*, faith ascribes mercy to God with an overplus, *Isa. 55. 7. he will abundantly pardon*; multiply to pardon, so the *Hebr.* He will drop pardons with our sins, which are most; *He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sin into the depths of the sea.* This is faiths language: he will pardon with an over-flowing mercy; cast a stone into the sea, and 'tis not barely covered, but buried many fathom deep. God will pardon thy greatest sins (faith faith) as the Sea doth a little pebble thrown into it; a few sins poured out upon the conscience, (like a pail of water spilt on the ground) seems a great flood; but the greatest poured into the Sea of Gods mercy, are swallowed up and not seen. Thus, *when the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, (the Scripture saith) there shall be none; and the sin of Judah, they should not be found.* And why so? *for I will pardon*, there is the reason, *Jer. 50. 20.*

S E C T. I I I.

Object. O but faith the trembling soul, the consideration of Gods infinitude, especially in two of his Attributes, drives me fastest to despair; Of all other my perplexed thoughts, when I think, how infinitely Holy God is, may I not fear what will become of me an unholy wretch? when again I look upon him as just, yea, infinitely just, how can I think he will remit so great wrongs as I have done to his glorious Name?

Ans. Faith will, and none but faiths fingers can untie this knot, and give a soul a satisfactory answer to this question. And first for the first Attribute, The Holiness of God.

First, Faith hath two things to answer. *First*, that though the infinite Holiness of Gods nature doth make him vehemently hate sin, yet the same doth strongly encline his heart to show mercy to sinners. What is it in the creature, that makes him hard hearted but sin? *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, Prov. 12. 10.* if wicked, then cruel; and the more Holy, the more merciful; hence it is, that acts of mercy and forgiveness, are with so much difficulty drawn (many times) from those that are Saints, even like

like milk out of a warded breast; because there are remainders of corruption in them, which cause some to have hardness of heart, and unwillingness to that work; *Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good*, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 12. 21.* im- plying, it is a hard work which cannot be done, till a victory be got over the Christians own heart; who hath contrary passions, that will strongly oppose such an act. How oft, alas, do we hear such lan- guage as this, from those that are gracious? my pa- tience is spent; I can bear no longer, and forgive no more: But God, who is purity without dross; ho- liness without the least alloy and mixture of sin, hath nothing to sow his heart into any unmercifulness. *If ye, being evil, (saith Christ) know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more, shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him?* *Mat. 7. 11.* Christ's design in this place, is to help them to larger apprehensions con- cerning the mercifulness of Gods heart; which that he may do, he directs them to the thoughts of his holiness, as that which would infallibly demon- strate the same. As if Christ had said, Can you persuade your hearts, (distempered with sinful pas- sions) to be kind to your children? how much more easie is it to think, that God who is holiness it self, will be so to his poor creatures, prostrate at his feet for mercy?

Secondly, Faith can tell the Soul, that the holiness of God is no enemy to pardoning-mercy; for 'tis the holiness of God, that obligeth him to be faith- ful in all his Promises; and this indeed, is as full a breast of consolation, as I know any, to a poor trem- bling Soul: when the doubting Soul reads those many precious Promises which are made to returning sinners; why doth he not take comfort in them? Surely, it is because the truth and faithfulness of God to perform them, is yet under some dispute in his Soul. Now, the strongest Argument that faith hath, to put this question out of doubt, and make the sinner accept the Promise as a true and faithful Word, is that which is taken from the holiness of God, who is the Promise-maker. It must be true (saith faith) what the Promise speaks; it can be no other, because a holy God makes it; Therefore God, to gain the more credit to the truth of his Promise, in the thoughts of his people, prefixeth so often this Attribute to his Promise, *I will help thee*, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Is- rael, *Isa. 41. 14.* That which in the Hebrew is *Mercies*, in the Septuagint is often *ra'ona*, *Holy things*. See *Isa. 55. 3.* Indeed the mercies of God are founded in holiness, and therefore are sure mer- cies. The reason of mans unfaithfulness in Promi- ses, proceeds from some unholiness in his heart; the more holy a man is, the more faithful we may ex- pect him to be; a good man (we say) will be as good as his word; to be sure a good God will. How many times did *Laban* change *Jacob's* wages after Promise? but Gods Covenant with him was invio- lably kept, though *Jacob* was not so faithful on his part as he ought; And why? but because he had to do with a holy God in this; but with a sinful man in the other; whose passions altered his thoughts,

and changed his countenance towards him; as we see the clouds and wind do the face of the heavens, and temper of the seasons.

We come to the second Attribute, which scares the tempted soul, and seems so little to befriend this pardoning Acts of Gods mercy. And that is, his Justice, which proves often matter of amaze- ment to the awakened sinner, rather than encourage- ment, especially when the serious thoughts of it pos- sess his heart; Indeed (my brethren) the naked con- sideration of this Attribute, (rent from the other) and the musing on it, without a Gospel-Comment, (through which alone it can be safely and comfort- ably viewed by a sin-smitten soul) must needs ap- pall and dispirit him whoever he be, yea, kindle a fire of horror in his bosom: for the creature seeing no way that God hath to vindicate his provoked justice, but by the eternal destruction and damna- tion of the sinner, cannot without an universal con- sternation of all the powers of his soul, think of that Attribute, which brings to his thoughts so fearful an expectation and looking for of judgement. *Heman*, though a holy man, yet even lost his wits with mu- sing on this sad subject, *Psal. 88. 15, 16.* *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* But faith can make good work of this also; faith will enable the Soul to walk in this fiery Attribute, with his comforts un- finged, as those three Worthies, *Dan. 3.* did in the flaming furnace; while unbelieving sinners are scorched, yea, swallowed up into despair, when they do but come in their thoughts near the mouth of it. There is a threefold consideration with which faith relieves the Soul, when the terrour of this Attribute takes hold on it.

SECT. IV.

First, Faith shews, (and this upon the best evi- dence) that God may pardon the greatest sinner, if penitent and believing, without the least prejudice to his justice.

Secondly, Faith goes further, and shews, that God in pardoning the believing sinner, doth not only save his justice, but advance the honour of it.

Thirdly, That God doth not only save and ad- vance his justice in pardoning a believing soul; but (as things stand now,) he hath no other way to secure his justice, but by pardoning the believing soul his sins, be they never so great. These three well di- gested, will render this Attribute as amiable, lovely, and comfortable to the thoughts of a believer, as that of mercy it self.

First, of the first; Faith shews, (and that upon the best evidence,) that God may pardon its sins, though never so great and mountainous, with safety to the justice of God. That question is not now to be disputed, whether God can be just and righteous in pardoning sinners. This (saith faith) was debated and determined long ago, at the Council-board of heaven by God himself, before so much as a vote, yea, a thought, could pass from Gods heart for the benefit of poor sinners; God expresseth thus much in the Promise, *Hosea 2. 19.* *I will betroth thee*

unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgement. Who is this that God means to marry? one that had played the whore, as appears by the former part of the Chapter. What doth he mean by betrothing; no other, but that he will pardon their sins, and receive them into the arms of his love and peculiar favour: but how can the righteous God take one that hath been a filthy strumpet, into his bosom? betroth such a whorish people, pardon such high climbing sins? how? Mark, *He will do it in judgement and in righteousness.* As if God had said, trouble not your thoughts to clear my justice in the act; I know what I do; the Case is well weighed by me. It is not like the sudden matches that are huddled up by men in one day, and repented of on the next: but is the result of the counsel of my holy Will so to do. Now when Satan comes full mouth against the believer with this objection, What, such a wretch as thou find favour in the eyes of God? faith can easily retort, Yes Satan, God can be as righteous in pardoning me, as in damning thee. God tells me, 'Tis in judgment and in righteousness. I leave thee therefore to dispute this case out with God, who is able to justify his own act. Now, though this in the lump were enough to reſel Satan, yet faith is provided with a more particular evidence, for the vindication of the Justice and righteousness of God in this his pardoning act. And this is founded on the full satisfaction which Christ hath given to God for all the wrong the believer hath done him by his sin. Indeed, it was the great undertaking of Christ, to bring Justice to kiss Mercy; that there might not be a dissenting Attribute in God, when this vote should pass, but the act of pardoning mercy might be carried clear, *nullo contradicente.* Therefore Christ, before he solicits the sinners cause with God, by request, performs first the other of satisfaction by sacrifice: He pays, and then prays, for what he hath paid: Presenting his Petition in the behalf of believing sinners, written with his own blood, that so justice might not disdain to read or grant it. I will not dispute, whether God could, by a Prerogative mercy (without a satisfaction) have issued out an act of pardon; but in this way of satisfaction, the righteousness of God (I am sure) may be vindicated in the conscience of the greatest sinner on earth; yea, the Devil himself is but a faint Disputant, when faith pincheth him with this Argument: 'tis a trench, which he is not able to climb. Indeed God laid our salvation in this method, that even we weak ones might be able to justify him, in justifying us, to the head of the most malicious Devil in Hell. Peruse that incomparable place, which hath balm enough in it, to heal the wounds of all the bleeding consciences in the world, where there is but faith to drop it in; and for ever to quench the fire of this dart, which is headed with the justice of God, *Rom. 3. 24, 25, 26. Being justified freely by his grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* O what

work will faith make of this Scripture? a soul castled within these walls is impregnable; First, observe, Christ is here called a *propitiation*, or if you will, a *propitiatory*, *ἱλαστήριον*, alluding to the *Mercy-seat*, where God promised to meet his people, that he might converse with them, and no dread from his Majesty fall upon them, *Exod. 25.* Now, you know, the *Mercy-seat* was placed over the Ark, to be a cover thereunto, it being the Ark, wherein the Holy Law of God was kept, from the violation of which, all the fears of a guilty soul arise; Therefore 'tis observable, that the dimensions of the one, were proportioned to the other; The *Mercy-seat* was to be as long, and broad to the full, as the *Ark* was, that no part thereof might be unshadowed by it; *vers. 10.* compared with *vers. 17.* Thus, Christ our true *Propitiatory*, covers all the Law, which else would come in to accuse the believer; but not one threatening now can arrest him, so long as this screen remains for faith to interpose, between Gods wrath and the Soul. Justice now, hath no mark to level at; God cannot see the sinner for Christ that hides him. This is not the man (faith wrath) that I am to strike. See how he flies to Christ, and takes Sanctuary in his satisfaction, and so is got out of my walk and reach, that being a privileged place, where I must not come to arrest any. It is usual, you know, in battels, to wear a Ribband, Handkerchief, or some such thing, to distinguish friends from foes. Christs satisfaction worn by faith, is the sign that distinguisheth Gods friends from his enemies; The scarlet thread on *Rahabs* window kept the destroying sword out of her house: and the blood of Christ pleaded by faith, will keep the Soul from receiving any hurt at the hand of Divine Justice.

Secondly, Observe, what hand Christ hath his Commission from, *whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.* Christ, we see, is the great Ordinance of Heaven; *him the Father hath sealed*; he is singled out from all others, Angels and Men, and set forth as the person chosen of God, to make atonement for sinners (as the *Lamb* was taken out of the flock, and set apart for the *Passover*.) When therefore Satan sets forth the believers sins in battel-array against him, and confronts him with their greatness; then faith runs under the shelter of this Castle, into the holes of this Rock. Surely (faith faith) my Saviour is infinitely greater than my greatest sins. I should impeach the wisdom of Gods choice, to think otherwise. God, who knew what a heavy burthen he had to lay upon his shoulders; was fully satisfied of his strength to bear it. He that refused sacrifice and burnt-offering for their insufficiency, would not have called him, had he not been all-sufficient for the work. Indeed, here lies the weight of the whole building; a weak faith may save, but a weak Saviour cannot; faith hath Christ to plead for it, but Christ hath none to plead for him; faith leans on Christs arm; but Christ stood upon his own legs, and if he had sunk under the burthen of our sins, he had been past the reach of any creature in Heaven or Earth to help him up.

Thirdly, Observe the reason, why God chose this way of issuing out his pardoning mercy, and that is,

is, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. Mark, not to declare his mercy, that is obvious to every eye. Every one will believe him merciful, that is forgiving, but to conceive how God should be righteous in forgiving sinners, this lies more remote from the creatures apprehensions; and therefore it is ingeminated and repeated, *vers. 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* As if God had said, I know why it seems so incredible (poor sinners) to your thoughts, that I should pardon all your iniquities, so great and many; you think, because I am a righteous God, that I will sooner damn a thousand worlds of sinners, than asperse my justice, and bring my name under the least suspicion of unrighteousness, and that thought is most true. I would indeed damn them over and over again, rather than stain the honour of my justice, which is my self; but I declare, yea, again I declare it, and command you, and the greatest sinners on earth upon pain of damnation to believe it; that I can be just, and yet the justifier of those sinners who believe in Jesus; O what boldness may the believer take at this news? Methink I see the Soul, that was even now pining to death with despair, and lotting upon Hell in his thoughts (as one already free among the dead) now revive and grow young again at these tydings; as Jacob, when he heard Joseph was alive: What? is justice (the only enemy I fear'd, and Attribute in Gods heart, which my thoughts fled from) now become my friend? then cheer up my soul, Who shall condemn, if God justifies? And how can God himself be against thee, when his very justice acquits thee?

SECT. V.

Object. But Satan will not thus leave the Soul; Dost thou, poor creature, (saith he) believe this strange Divinity? Is it just for God to pardon thee for the satisfaction that another makes? one man commit the murder, and another man that is innocent hang'd for it; call you this just? the Law demands the person sinning to be delivered up to justice; we find no mention of a surety to be allowed by the Covenant, *In the day that thou eatest thou shalt die.*

Ans. First, Faith teacheth the Soul to acquiesce in the declaration that God makes of his own mind. Now though the threatening at first acquaints us with the sinners name only; yet faith finds a gracious relaxation of that threatening in the Gospel-Covenant; where to the believers everlasting comfort, God promiseth to accept the sinners debt at Christ's hand, whom therefore we find arrested upon our action, *Isa. 53. 5. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Here is bottom strong enough for faith to rest on. And why should we (shallow creatures) ruffle Gospel-truths, to the ensnaring our own thoughts; by thinking to fathom the bottomless depths of Gods justice, with the short cordage of our reason, which we see dunced by the

meanest piece in Gods work of creation? Faith spies a Devil in this beautiful Serpent, Reason, which for its smooth tongue Satan useth on a mischievous design to undermine, as other, so in particular, this one most sweet and fundamental truth of the Gospel, I mean the satisfaction of Christ, and therefore faith protests against the illegality of reasons Court. What indeed hath reason to call before her lower bench these mysteries of our faith, that are purely supernatural, and so not under her cognizance? and O that those, in this proud Age of ours, would consider it who go to Law (as I may so say) with the highest Gospel-truths, before this *heathen Judge, Reason*; whereby they evacuate one great end of the Gospel, which is to sacrifice our shallow Reason on faiths Altar, that so we may give the more signal honour to the truth of God, in believing the high mysteries of the Gospel upon his naked report of them in the word, though Reason with its little span cannot comprehend them.

Secondly, The believer can clear God as just in receiving the debt at Christs hand, from that near union that is betwixt Christ and his people. The husband may lawfully be arrested for his wifes debt, because this union is voluntary; and it is to be supposed, he did, or ought to have considered what her estate was before he contracted so near a relation to her. A suit may justly be commenced against a surety, because it was his own act to engage for the debt. To be sure, Christ was most free in engaging himself in the sinners cause. He knew what a sad plight mans nature was in; and he had an absolute freedom to please himself in his choice; whether he would leave man to perish, or lend his helping hand towards his recovery; he had also an absolute power of his own life, which no meer creature hath; so that it being his own offer (upon his Fathers call) to take our nature in marriage, thereby to interest himself in our debt, and for the payment of it, to disburse and pour out his own precious blood to death, how dare proud flesh call the justice of God to the bar, and bring his righteousness in this transaction into question, for which God promised himself the highest expressions of love, and thankfulness at his creatures hands?

Secondly, Faith doth not only bear witness to the justice of God, that he may pardon a poor believing sinner, and yet be just; but it shews that he may advance the honour of his justice by pardoning the believing soul, more than in damning the impenitent sinner. And surely God had no less design in the Gospel-Covenant than this; he that would not the death of a sinner, but to vindicate his justice; would not certainly have consented to the death of his only son, but for the higher advance, and further glorying of his justice in the eye of his creature: Christ saith, *He came not only, that we sinners might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly, Joh. 10.* that is, more abundantly than we should have inherited it from innocent Adam. May we not therefore say, that Christ did not die, that God might only have his due debt, but that he might have it more abundantly payed by Christ, than he could have had it at the creatures hands? but more particularly

Particularly the Justice of God will appear here clothed with four glorious circumstances, that can not be found in the payment which the sinner by his own personal sufferings makes unto it.

Note First, If we consider the person, at whose hand Divine Justice receives satisfaction. When the sinner is damned for his own sins, it is a poor sorry creature that is punished, but when Christ suffereth, the debt is paid by a more honourable hand: God hath it from one that is near to himself, yea, equal with himself. *Awake O sword against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts, Zech. 13. 7.* who will not say, a Judge gives more eminent testimony of his Justice, when he condemns his own Son, than when he arraigns a stranger? Here God indeed declared his utmost hatred to sin, and inflexible love to Justice, in that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

Justice satisfied Secondly, If we consider the manner how the debt is paid, when the sinner is damned, it is in a poor beggarly way by retail; now a few pence, and then a few more, he is ever paying, but never comes to the last farthing; and therefore must for ever lye in prison for non-payment. But at Christs hands God receives all the whole debt in one lump, so that Christ could truly say, *It is finished, John 19. 30.* as much as if he had said; there are but a few moments, and the work of redemption will be finished. I have the sum now in my hand to pay God his whole debt, and as soon as I have bowed my head, and the breath is once out of my body, all will be finished. Yea, he hath his discharge for the receipt of the whole sum due to Gods justice, from the mouth of God himself, in which we find him triumphing, *Esa. 5. 8.* *He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me?* yea, still more, Christ hath not only discharged the old debt, but by the same blood hath made a new purchase of God for his Saints. So that God, who was even now the creditor, is become the debtor to his creature, and that for no less than eternal life, which Christ hath paid for, and given every believer authority, humbly to claim of God in his name. See them both in one place, *Heb. 10. 13, 14, 15.* *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expelling till his enemies he made his foot-stool, for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* He hath not only crossed the Debt-book for believers, but perfected them for ever; that is, made as certain provision for their perfection in glory, as for their salvation from Hells punishment, from which he exhorts them, *vers. 22.* *to draw near in full assurance of faith.* Let us not fear, but we shall receive at Gods hands, what Christ hath payed for.

Thirdly, when God damns the sinner, his Justice indeed appears. Those condemned miscreants have not one righteous syllable to charge their Judge withal; but mercy is not seen to sit so glorious on the throne in this sentence pronounced on the sinner. But when Christ suffered, justice and mercy met; indeed justice appears, never more orient in God or Man, than when it is in conjunction with mercy. Now in the Lord Christs death, they shone both in

all their glory, and did mutually set off each the other. Here the white and the red, the roses and the lilies were so admirably tempered, that it is hard to say, which presents the face of justice most beautiful to our eye, Gods wrath upon Christ for us, or his mercy to us for his sake.

Fourthly, When God damns the sinner, justice is glorified only passively. God forceth his glory from Devils and damned souls; but they do not willingly pay the debt. They acknowledge God just, because they can do no other, but at the same time hate him, while they seem to vindicate him; now in the satisfaction that Christ gives, justice is glorified actively, and that both from Christ, who was not dragged to the cross, or haled to his sufferings, as the damned are to their prison and torment. *But gave himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God, Ephes. 5. 2.* suffering as willingly for us, as ever we sinned against him. And also from believing souls, who now sing praises to the mercy and justice of God that redeemed them; and will for ever in Heaven run division on the same note; now by how much the voluntary sufferings of Christ are better than the forced torments of the damned; and the chearful praises of Saints in Heaven more melodious in Gods ear, than the extorted acknowledgements of damned souls in Hell; by so much the justice of God is more glorified by Christs sufferings, than theirs. O what incomparable boldness may this send the soul withal to the throne of grace? who, when he is begging pardon for Christs sake? may without any hazard to his eternal salvation, say; *Lord, if my damnation will glorify thy justice more, or so much as the death of Christ for me hath done, and the everlasting praises (which my thankful heart shall rebound in Heaven to the glory of all thy Attributes for my salvation) will do, let me have that rather than this.*

Thirdly, Faith doth not only see justice preserved, yea, advanced in this act of pardoning mercy; but it will tell the soul, (and can make good what it saith) that God (as things now stand) cannot be just, if he doth not pardon the sins of a repenting believing soul, how great soever they have been. One great part of justice consists in a faithful and punctual performance of promises: he is, (we say) a just man, that keeps his word. And can God be a just God if he doth not? The word is gone out of his mouth, that he will forgive such. Yea, he is willing to be accounted just or unjust by us, as he makes performance thereof. See where he lays this his Attribute to pawn, upon this very account, *1 John 1. 9.* *If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, he doth not say merciful, but just; as the Attribute, which we most fear should vote against us; this he would have us know, is bound for the performance of the promise.* It was mercy in God to make the promise; but justice to perform, what mercy hath promised, *Mic. 7. 20.* *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham;* God was not bound to make a promise to Abraham and his seed; but having once passed his Word to him, it was truth to Jacob, who was heir to that bond which God had left in his Fathers hand.

CHAP. XX.

Faiths Second Answer to Satans Argument, taken from the greatness of Sin, thereby to drive the soul to despair: where Faith opposeth the greatness of the Promises, against the greatness of the souls Sins.

Secondly, Faith quenches this temptation to despair, drawn from the greatness of sin, by opposing the greatness of the Promises, to Sins greatness; faith can only see God in his greatness; and therefore none but faith can see the promises in their greatness; because the value of promises is according to the worth of him that makes them: Hence it comes to pass that Promises have so little efficacy on an unbelieving heart, either to keep from Sin, or to comfort under terror for Sin. Promises are like the cloaths we wear; which if there be heat in the body to warm them, then they will warm us: but, if they receive no heat from the body, they give none to it; where there is faith to chafe the promise, there the promise will afford comfort and peace abundantly; it will be as a strong cordial glowing with inward joy in the creatures bosome, but on a dead unbelieving heart, it lyes cold and ineffectual; it hath no more effect on such a Soul, than a cordial that is poured down a dead mans throat, hath on him. The promises have not comfort actually and formally as fire hath heat; then it were only going to them, and we should be warm, taking them up in our thoughts, and we should be comforted; but virtually, as the fire is in the flint, which requires some labour and art to strike it out and draw it forth. Now none but faith can learn us this skill of drawing out the sweetness and vertue of the promise; which it doth these three ways among many others.

SECT. I.

First, Faith leads the Soul to the spring-head of the promise, where it may stand with best advantage, to take a view of their greatness and preciousness. Indeed we understand little of things, till we trace them to their originals, and can see them lying in their causes. Then a soul will know his sins to be great, when he sees them in their spring and source flowing from an invenom'd nature, that teems with enmity against God. Then the sinner will tremble at the threatnings, which roul like thunder over his head, ready to fall every moment in some judgement or other upon him; when he sees from whence they are sent, the perfect hatred that God bears to sin, and infinite wrath with which he is inflamed against the sinner for it. In a word, then the poor trembling Soul will not count the consolation of the promises small, when it sees from what fountain it flows, the bosome of Gods free mercy. This indeed is the Original source of all promises. The Covenant it self, which comprehends them all is called *Mercy*, because the product of mercy, *Luke 1. 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant.* Now, faith faith, if the promises flow from this sea of Gods free mercy,

then they must needs be infinite, as that is, boundless and bottomless, as that is; so that to reject the promise, or question the sufficiency of the provision made in it upon this account, because thy sins are great or many, casts a dishonourable reflection on that mercy, in whose womb the promise was conceived; and God will certainly bring his action of defamation against thee, for aspersing this his darling Attribute, which he can least endure to see slandered and traduced. God makes account you have done your worst against him, when once you report him to be unmerciful, or but scant in his mercy. How great a sin this is, may be conceived by the thoughts which God hath of this disposition and frame of spirit in his creature. An unmerciful heart, is such an abomination before the Lord, that it hath few like it. This lyes at the bottom of the heathens charge, as the sediment, and grossest part of all their horrid sins, *Rom. 1. 3. they were implacable, unmerciful.* Now, to attribute that to God, which he so abhors in his creature, must needs make a heart tender of the good name of God to tremble and exceedingly fear. It was a dreadful punishment God brought upon *Jeoram* King of *Judah*, *2 Chron. 21. 19. Whom he smote in his bowels with an incurable disease, that after two years (torment) his very bowels fell out.* And why did this sore and heavy plague befall him? surely to let him know his want of bowels of mercy to his brethren and Princes, whom he most cruelly butchered. He had not bowels in his heart, and he therefore shall have none in body. Now darest thou (faith faith) impute want of bowels to God, that he will not shew mercy to thee, who penitently seeks it in Christs Name, when thou seest what testimony he gives of his incensed wrath against those men, who have hardened their bowels against their brethren; yea, their enemies? O have a care of this. To shut thy own bowels of compassion from thy brother in need, is a grievous sin, and brings it into question, whether the love of God dwells in thee, *1 Joh. 3. 17.* But, to asperse the merciful heart of God, as if his bowels of compassion were shut against a poor soul in need, that desires to repent and return, is transcendently the greater abomination, and puts it out of all question (where it is persisted in) that the love of God dwells not in him. It is impossible that love to God should draw such a mishapen portraiture of God as this is.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Faith attends to the end of the promises, which gives a further prospect of their greatness. Now the Word, which is the light faith goes by, discovers a double end of promises, especially of the promise of pardoning mercy.

First,

First, The exalting and magnifying the riches of free grace, which God would have appear in all its glory (so far I mean, as it is possible to be exposed to the creatures view, for the full sight of Gods glory, is an object adequate to his own eye, and none else) see this counsel and mysterious design sweetly opened, *Ephes. chap. 1. vers. 6, 9, 11, 12.* The summs of all which, will amount to this: That God in himself hath taken up a purpose of pardoning, and saving a Company of poor lost sinners for Christs sake; and this he hath promulged in the promises of the Gospel; And the plot of all is, that he might gather these all together at last in Heaven, some of which are already there, others of them at present on earth, and some yet unborn, and when they shall all meet together in one glorious quire there, that there they may by their triumphant songs, and Hallelujahs, fill the Heavens with praiseful acclamations of thankfulness to the glory of that mercy, which hath thus pardoned and saved them. Now, faith observing the praise of Gods mercy to be the end aimed at by him in the promise, comes with good news to the trembling soul, and tells it; that if God will be but true to his own thoughts, and keep his eye on that mark, where at first he hath set it; impossible it is, that he should reject any poor penitent sinner, merely for the greatness of the sins he hath committed. It is the exaltation of his mercy (faith faith) that God hath in his eye, when he promiseth pardon to poor sinners. Now, which exalts this most, to pardon little or great sinners? whose voyce will be highest and shrillest in the song of praise, thinkest thou? surely his, to whom most is forgiven; and therefore God cannot, but be most ready to pardon the greatest sinners, when truly penitent. A Physician that means to be famous, will not send away those that most need his skill and art; and only practise upon such diseases as are slight and ordinary. They are the great cures, which ring far and near: when one given over by himself and others, as a dead man, is by the skill and care of a Physician, rescued out of the jaws of death, that seem'd to have enclod'd him, and raised to health; This commends him to all that hear of it, and gains him more reputation, than a whole years practice in ordinary cures. The great revenue of praise, is paid into Gods Exchequer from those who have had great sins pardoned; *He that hath five hundred pence forgiven, will love more than he that hath but fifty,* by Christs own judgement, *Luke 7. 43.* and where there is most love, there is like to be most praise; love and praise being symbolical, the one soon resolving into the other. The voice of a *Manasses*, a *Magdalen*, and a *Paul*, will be heard (as I may so say) above all the rest in Heavens consort. The truth is, greatness of sin, is so far from putting a bar to the pardoning of a penitent sinner in Gods thoughts; that he will pardon none (how little sinners soever they have been) except they see and acknowledge their sins to be great, before they come to him on such an errand. And therefore he useth the *Law*, to make way (by its convictions and terrors on the conscience) for his pardoning mercy, to ascend the throne in the penitent sinners heart, with the more magnificence and honour, *Rom. 5. 20.* The *Law* entered (that is, it was

promulged at first by *Moses*, and is still preached) *that the offence might abound;* (that is, in the conscience, by a deeper sense and remorse,) And why set but that, *where sin abounded, grace might much more abound.* We must needs shape our thoughts of the mercy that pardons our sins, suitable to the thoughts we frame to our selves of the sins we have committed; if we conceive these little, how can we think the other great? And if we tremble at the greatness of our sins, we must needs triumph and exult at the transcendency of the mercy, which so far exceeds their bulk and greatness. He that wonders at the height of some high Mountain, would much more wonder at the depth of those waters, which should quite swallow and cover it from being seen.

The second end of the promise, is, the believers comfort. The Word, especially this part of it, was on purpose writ, *that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, they might have hope,* *Rom. 15. 4.* God was willing to give poor sinners all the security and satisfaction that might be, concerning the reality of his intentions and immutability of this counsel; which his mercy had resolved upon from eternity, for the saving of all those who would embrace Christ, and the terms offered through him in the Gospel; which that he might do, he makes publication thereof in the Scripture, where he opens his very heart, and exposeth the purposes of his love, (that from everlasting he had taken up, for the salvation of poor sinners) to their own view, in the many precious promises (that run like veins throughout the whole body of the Scriptures) and these with all the seals and ratifications, which either his wisdom could find, or mans jealous unbelieving heart desire. And all this, on a design to silence the querulous spirit of poor tempted souls, and make their life more comfortable; who, pursued by the hue and cry of their high climbing sins, take sanctuary for their lives in Christ Jesus. As we have it, *in totidem verbis, Heb. 6. 18.* *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope that is set before us.* And because that this, of the greatness and multitude of the creatures sins, is both the heaviest millstone, which the Devil can find, to tye about the poor sinners neck, in order to the drowning him in despair; and that knife also, which is oftneft taken up by the tempted sinners own hands for the murdering his faith; therefore the more frequent and abundant provision is made by God against this; or, read for this purpose these choice of Scriptures, *Exod. 34. 5. Jer. 3. the whole Chapter. Isa. 1. 18. Isa. ch. 55. 7, 8, 9. and 21. Heb. 7. 25. Epist. i. Job. 1. 9.* These, and such like places, are the strong holds which faith retreats into, when this battery is raised against the soul. Canst thou for shame be gravel'd (faith faith, O my soul) with an argument drawn merely from the greatness of thy sins? which is answered in every page almost in the Bible, and to confute which, so considerable a part of Scripture was writ? Thus faith hisseth Satan away with this his argument, (that he counts so formidable) as they would do a wrangling Sophister out of the Schools, when he boldly and ridiculously denies some known principle,

X No infamous character - but a miserable lunatic, out of whom Christ cast see on devils -

principle, acknowledg'd by all for a truth, that have not lost their wits. But I would not be here mistaken, God forbid, that while I am curing despair, I should caute presumption in any. These two distempers of the soul are equally mortal and dangerous, and so contrary, that like the cold stomach, and the hot liver in the same person, while the Physician thinks to help nature in the one, to a heat, for digesting its food, he sometimes unhappily kindles a fire in the other, that destroys nature it self. Thus, while we labour to cheer the drooping souls spirits, and strengthen him to retain and digest the promise for his comfort, we are in danger of nourishing that feverish heat of presumptuous confidence, which is a fire, will soon eat out all care to please, and fear to displease God, and consequently all ground of true faith in the soul. Faith and fear, being like the natural heat, and radical moisture in the body, which is never well, but when both are preserved, *The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.* Let me therefore caution thee Christian; As thou meanest to find any relief from the mercy of God in a day of distress: Take heed thou dost not think to befriend thy self with hopes of any favour thou maist find from it, though thou continuest thy friendship with thy lusts. A design as infeasable, as to reconcile light and darkness, and to bring day to dwell with night. Thou needest not indeed fear, to believe the pardon of thy sins (if thou repentest of them) merely because they are great; but tremble to think of sinning boldly, because the mercy of God is great. Though mercy be willing to be a Sanctuary to the trembling sinner, to shelter him from the curse of his sin; yet it disdains to spread her wing over a bold sinner, to cover him while he is naught with his lust. What? sin because there are promises of pardon, and these promises made by mercy, which as far exceeds our sins, as God doth the creature? Truly, this is the *Antipodes* to the meaning, that Gods mercy had in making them, and turns the Gospel with its heels upwards. As if your servant should get to your cellar of strong waters, and with them make himself drunk, which you keep for them, when sick or faint, and then only to be used. O take heed of quaffing thus in the bowls of the Sanctuary. It is the sad soul, not the sinning, that this wine of consolation belongs to.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Faith presents the Christian with a cloud of witnesses, to whom the Promise hath been fulfilled, and these as great sinners as himself is. Scripture-examples are Promises verified. They are book-cases, which faith may make use of by way of encouragement, as well as Promises. God would never have left the Saints great blots to stand in the Scriptures, to the view of the world in all succeeding generations, had not it been of such use and advantage to tempted souls, to choak this temptation, which of all other makes the most dangerous breach in their souls, so wide sometimes, that despair it self is ready to enter in at it. Blessed *Paul* gives this very reason, why such acts of pardoning mercy to great

sinners are recorded, *Eph. 2.* he shews; *First*, What foul filthy creatures, himself and other believers contemporary with him, were, before they were made partakers of Gospel grace, *verse 3.* *Among whom also we all had our conversations in times past, in the lusts of the flesh;* and then he magnifies the rich mercy of God, that rescued and took them out of that damned desperate state, *verse 4.* *But God who was rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickned us in Christ.* And why must the world know all this? O, God had a design and plot of mercy to more than themselves in them, *verse 7.* *That in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindest towards us, through Christ Jesus, verse 7.* where-ever the Gospel comes, this shall be spoken of; what great sins he had forgiven to them, that unbelief might have her mouth stopt to the end of the world; and this arrow, which is so oft on Satans string, might be made headless and harmless. God commanded *Joshua* to take twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, and set them up; and observe the reason, *verse 6, 7.* *That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, What mean you by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.* Thus, God hath by his pardoning mercy, taken up some great notorious sinners out of the very depths of sin, who lay at the very bottom, as it were, of hell, swallowed up, and ingulph'd in all manner of abomination; and these he hath set up in his Word, that when any poor tempted souls, to the end of the world, (who are even overwhelmed with fears, from the greatness of their sins) shall see and read what God hath done for these, they may be relieved and comforted with these examples, by God intended to be, as a memorial of what he hath done for others in time past; so a sign, what he can still do, yea will, for the greatest sinners (to the worlds end) upon their repentance and faith. No sins, though as great and many as the waters of Jordan themselves, shall be able to stand before the mercy of Gods gracious Covenant, but shall all be cut off; and everlastingly pardoned to them. O who can read a *Manasseh*, a *Magdalene*, a *Saul*; yea, an *Adam*, (who undid himself, and a whole world with him) in the Roll of pardoned sinners, and yet turn away from the promise, out of a fear that there is not mercy enough in it, to serve his turn? These are as Land-marks, that shew what large boundaries mercy hath set to it self, and how far it hath gone, even to take into its pardoning arms, the greatest sinners, that make not themselves incapable thereof by final impenitency. It were a healthful walk (poor doubting Christian) for thy soul, to go this circuit, and oft to see where the utmost stone is laid; and boundary set by Gods pardoning mercy, further than which he will not go. That thou maist not turn in the stone, to the prejudice of the mercy of God by thy own unbelief, nor suffer thy self to be abused by Satans lyes, who will make nothing to

H h h remove

remove Gods Land-mark, (if he may, by it, but increase thy trouble of spirit) though he be cursed for it himself. But if after all this, thy sins seem to exceed the proportion of any one, thou canst find pardoned in Scripture, (which were strange) yet faith at this plunge hath one way left beyond all these examples for thy souls succor, and that is to fix thy eye on Christ, who though he never had sin of his own, yet laid down his life to procure and purchase pardon for all the elect, and hath obtained it, (they are all, and shall as they come upon the stage, be pardoned.) Now, faith faith, suppose thy sins were greater than any one Saints; yet are they as great as all the sins of the elect together? thou dar'st not surely say, or think so. And, cannot Christ procure thy pardon, who art but a single person, that hath done it for so many millions of his elect? yea, were thy sins as great

as all theirs are, the sum would be the same; and God could forgive it, if it lay in one heap, as well as now, when it is in several. Christ is the Lamb, that takes away the sin of the world, John 1. 29. See here, all the sins of the elect world truss'd up in one fardel, and he carries it lightly away into the Land of forgetfulness. Now faith will tell thee poor soul, that the whole virtue and merit of Christs blood, by which the world was redeemed, is offered to thee, and shall be communicated to thy soul in particular; Christ doth not retail and parcel out his blood, and the purchase of it; some to one, and some to another, (then thou might'st say something) but he gives his whole self to the faith of every believer. All is yours, you are Christs. O, what maist thou not, poor soul, take up from the Promise, upon the credit of so great a Redeemer?

CHAP. XXI.

Faiths third Answer to Satans Argument, urging the soul to despair. where faith opposeth the greatness of this one sin of despair, to the greatness of the rest.

THirdly, Faith to quench this fiery dart, headed with the greatness of sin, and shot by Satan to drive the poor and penitent soul to despair, teacheth him to oppose the greatness of this one sin of despair, to the greatness of all his other sins: What, faith faith, would Satan perswade thee, because thou hast been so great and prodigious a sinner, therefore not to believe, or dare to think the Promise hath any good news for thee? retort thou, O my soul, his Argument upon himself, and tell him, That very thing, by which he would dissuade thee from believing, doth much more deter thee from despairing; and that is the greatness of this sin above all thy other. Grant to be true what he chargeth thee withal, that thou art such a monster in sin as he sets thee forth, (though thou hast no reason to think so, upon his bare report, but yield him his saying) dost thou think to mend the matter, or better thy condition by despairing? Is this all the kindness he will shew thee, to make thee of a great sinner, a desperate sinner like himself? This indeed is the only way he can think of, to make thee worse than thou art; and that this is true, faith is able to prove by these four considerations of this bloody horrid sin, which will easily evince more malignity to be in this one sin of despair, than in any other, yea, all other together.

SECT. I.

First, Despair opposeth God in the greatest of all his commands. The greatest command without all compare in the whole Bible, is to believe: when those Jews asked our Lord Jesus, John 6. 28. *What shall we do, that we might work the Works of God?* mark his answer, verse 29. *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* As if he had said, the most compendious way, that I am able to give you, is to receive me into your hearts by faith; do this, and you do all in one. *This is the*

work, that is iustar omnium, all you do is undone, and your selves also, till this work be done, for which you shall have as much thanks at Gods hands, as if you could keep the whole Law; indeed it is accepted in lieu of it. *Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*, Rom. 4. 5. where, *he that worketh not*, is not meant a slothful lazy sinner, that hath no list to work; nor a rebellious sinner, whose heart riseth against the work, which the Holy Law of God would employ him in; but the humbled sinner, who desires and endeavours to work, but is no way able to do the task, the Law as a Covenant sets him; and therefore is said in a *law-sense*, *not to work*, because he doth not work to the Laws purpose, so as to answer its demands, which will accept nothing short of perfect obedience; this mans faith on Christ is accepted for righteousness; that is, God reckons him so, and so he shall pass at the great day by the Judges sentence, as if he had never trod one step awry from the path of the Law. Now, if faith be the work of God above all other, then unbelief is the work of the Devil, and that, which he had rather thou shouldst do, than drink or drab; and despair is unbelief at the worst; unbelief among sins, is as the plague among diseases, the most dangerous; but when it riseth to despair, then it is as the plague with the tokens appearing, that bring the certain message of death with them. Unbelief is despair in the bud, despair is unbelief at its full growth.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Despair hath a way peculiar to itself of dishonouring God above other sins. Every sin wounds the Law, and the Name of God through the Laws sides. But this wound is healed, when the penitent sinner by faith comes to Christ, and closeth with him. God makes account, reparations now are fully

fully made (through Christ, whom the believer receives) for the wrong done to his Law, and his Name vindicated from the dishonour cast upon it by the creatures former iniquities; yea, that it appears more glorious, because it is illustrious, by the shining forth of one title of honour, (not the least prized by God himself) his forgiving mercy, which could not have been so well known to the creature, if not drawn forth into act upon this occasion. But, what would you say of such a prodigious sinner, that when he hath wounded the Law, is not willing to have it healed? when he hath dishonoured God, and that in an high provoking manner, is not willing the dirt he hath cast on Gods face, should be wiped off? methinks I see every one of your choler to rise at the reading of this, against such a wretch, and hear you asking; as once *Abasuerus* did *Ester*, *Who is he, and where is he, that doest presume in his heart to do so?* *Ester* 7. 5. Would you know? Truly the Adversary and Enemy is this wicked Despair. The despairing soul is the person that will not let Christ make satisfaction for the wrong, that by his sins he hath done God. Suppose a man should wound another dangerously in his passion, and when he hath done, will not let any Chirurgion come near to cure the wound he hath made. Every one would say, his last act of cruelty was worse than his first. O my soul (faith faith) thou didst ill, yea, very ill, in breaking the holy Laws of God, and dishonouring the Name of the great God of heaven and earth thereby; let thy heart ake for this. But thou dost far worse by thy despairing of mercy. In this act thou rejectest Christ, and keepest him off from satisfying the justice of the Law that is injured by thee, and from redeeming the honour of his Name from the reproach thy sins have scandalized it with. What language speaks thy despair, but this? Let God come by his right and honour as he can, thou wilt never be an instrument active in the helping of him to it, by believing on Christ, in whom he may fully have them with advantage. O what shame would despair put the mercy of God to in the sight of Satan his worst enemy? He claps his hands at this, to see all the glorious Attributes of God served alike, and divested of their honour: this is meat and drink to him. That cursed spirit desires no better music, than to hear the soul ring the Promises, like bells, backward; make no other use of them, than to confirm it in its own desperate thoughts of its damnation, and to tell it, hell-fire is kindled in its conscience, which no mercy in God, will or can quench to eternity. As the bloody *Jews* and *Roman* souldiers, exercised their cruelty on every part almost of Christs body, crowning his head with thorns, goring his side with a spear, and fastning his hands and feet with nails; So the despairing sinner deals with the whole Name of God. He doth, as it were, put a mock-crown on the head of his wisdom, setting it all to naught, and charging it foolishly, as if the method of salvation was not laid with prudence by the all-wise God. He nails the hands of his Almighty power, while he thinks his sins are of that nature, as put him out of the reach, and beyond the power of God to save him. He pierceth the

tender bowels of God through his meitty; of which he cannot see enough in a God, (that not only hath, but is mercy and love it self) to perswade him to hope for any favour or forgiveness at his hands. In a word, the despairing soul transfixeth his very heart and will, while he unworthily frames notions of God, as if he were unwilling to the work of mercy, and not so enclined to exercise acts of pardon and forgiveness on poor sinners, as the Word declares him. No, despair basely misreports him to the soul, as if he were a lame God, and had no feet (affections I mean) to carry him to such a work as forgiving sin is. Now what does the sum of all this amount to, (if you can without horror and amazement stand to cast it up, and consider the weight of those circumstances which aggravate the flagitiousness of this unparallel'd fact) surely it riseth to no less than the highest attempt that the creature can make for the murdering of God himself; for the infinitude of Gods Wisdom, Power, Mercy, and all his Attributes, are more intrinsecal to the essence and being of God, than the heart-blood is to the life of a mortal man. Shall he that lets out the heart-blood of a man, yea, but attempts to do it, be a murderer, (especially if he be a Prince or King the design is against) and deservedly suffer as such a one? And shall not he much more be counted and punish'd, as the worst of all murderers, that attempts to take away the life of God, (though his arm and dagger be too short for the purpose) by taking from him in his thoughts, the infinitude of those Attributes, which are (as I may say) the very life of God? Surely God will neither part with the glory, nor suffer the dishonour of his Name, at the hands of his sorry creature; but will engage all his Attributes for the avenging himself on the wretch that attempts it. O tremble therefore at despair. Nothing makes thy face gather blackness, and thy soul hasten faster to the complexion of damned souls, than this; now thou sinnest after the similitude of those that are in Hell.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Despair strengthens and enrageth all other sins in the soul. None fight so fiercely, as those who look for no quarter. They think themselves dead men, and therefore they will sell their lives as dear as they can. *Samson* despaired ever getting out of the *Philistims* hands, (his eyes being now lost, and he unfit to make an escape) what doth he meditate, now his case is desperate, but his enemies ruine, though it cost him his own? He cares not, though he pulls the house on his own head, so it may but fall on the *Philistims* also. *Abisalom*, when by the cursed counsel of *Achisophel*, he had (as he thought) made himself so hateful to *David*, as to put him past all hope of being treated with, then breaks out with an high rage, and seeks the ruine of his Royal father with fire and sword. So cruel a thing is despair, it teaches to shew no respect where it looks for none. But most clearly it appears in the Devil himself, who knowing himself to be excepted from pardon, sins with a rage as high as heaven; and the same sin hath the same effects in men, that it hath

in the Devil, according to the degrees of it that are found in them, Jer. 18. 11, 12. *They said there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices.* Did you never see a sturdy beggar, (after a while knocking at a door, and concluding by the present silence, or denial, that he shall have nothing given him) fall into a cursing and railing of them that dwell there? even such foul language doth despair learn the sinner to belch out against the God of heaven, if despair enters, it is impossible to keep blasphemy out; pray therefore, and do thy utmost to repel this dart, lest it soon set thy soul on a flame with this hell-fire of blasphemy. Hear O you souls smitten for sin, that spend your lives in sighs, sobs and tears, for your horrid crimes past; would you again be seen fighting against God as fierce as ever? as you would not, take heed of despair. If thou once thinkest that God's heart is hardened against thee, thy heart will not be long hardning against him. And this (by the way) may administer comfort to the thoughts of some gracious, but troubled souls, who can find no faith that they have; yea, who are oft reckoning themselves among despairers. Let me ask thee, who art in this sad condition, this one thing, Canst thou find any love breathing in thy heart towards God, though thou canst find no breath of love coming at present from him to thee? and art thou ten-

der and fearful of sinning against him, even while thou seemest to thy own thoughts to hope for no mercy from him? if so, be of good comfort; thy faith may be weak, but thou art far from being under the power of despair; desperate souls do not use to reserve any love for God, or care for the pleasing of him. There is some faith surely in thy soul, which is the cause of these motions, though (like the spring in a Watch) it be it self unseen, when the other graces moved by it are visible.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The greatness of this sin of despair appears in this, that the least sin envenom'd by it, is unpardonable; and without this, the greatest is pardonable. That must needs of all sins be most abominable, which makes the creature incapable of mercy. *Judas* was not damn'd merely for his treason and murder; for others, that had their hands deep in the same horrid fact, obtained a pardon, by faith in the blood which through cruelty they shed; but they were these, heightned into the greatest malignity possible, from the putrid stuff of despair and final impenitency, with which his wretched heart was filled, that he died so miserably of, and now is infinitely more miserably damned for.

TO



TO THE
Right Honourable, and truly Religious, the Lady,
MARY VERE,
BARONESSE of *TILBURY*,
And my much honoured Lady.

Madam,

SOME have thought it better to define *Man* from *Religion* his chief End, than from *Reason* his principal Faculty; supposing that by it he may most exactly be distinguish'd from other *Animals*, that are all utterly incapable of Religion, but have some of them a sagacity that is something like Mans discursive Faculty. What-ever there is in this nice Notion, sure I am, that Mans chief Prerogative and Dignity which he hath to glory of, is this, That he is the only Creature in the whole visible World made to worship and enjoy his Maker. *All the Creatures are servants*, Psal. 119. 91. But Man only is a Priest to God; they obey their Creator, he only worships him. How then comes it to pass, that true Piety and Religion should be thought a diminution to the honour of any? yet to our amazement we see, the readiest way a man can take to be made a mock and laughing-stock, is with *David*, to dance zealously before the Ark. The Temple of *Vertue* led the *Heathen* to the other of *Honour*; but Piety and Godliness brings the *Christian* to disgrace and scorn. No sooner does any dare to own Religion in the power of it, but Fanatique is writ on his back, and a Fools Cap is set upon his head; which makes many turn *Nicodemites* in this scornful Age, and carry their Religion in a dark Lanthorn, like those in *Salvians* time, *Ne viles haberentur*; lest they should be counted base and vile for their pains. We have had I confess too many in our late degenerate days (Men born, as one saith, to do Religion a mischief) who by professing high, and living low, in sordid practices, have given Religion such a wound in its reputation, as is not like to be cured while they are above ground, who have thus scandalized both it, and the Professors of it. It is the Worlds custom to dress up the faithful servants of Christ in the broken Professors Cloaths, and to draw their picture with the Hypocrites ill-favour'd face, that they all may be thought to be alike, a company who would cheat the World in a religious habit; so that he who means now to be religious, must be content to be thought a counterfeit by others. But *Madam*, you are not (blessed be God) to begin now to cast up what it will cost to build for Heaven; you have not amidst these scandals been (as the manner of some is) offended with Religion for the faults of those that have pretended to it; neither have you in this scandalizing Age laid a stone of offence before others, but admirably vindicated the honour of Religion (which others have prostituted) by the amiable uniformity

The Epistle Dedicatory.

mity of your Piety, Beneficence, Charity, Humility; yea, all those graces which have the greatest advantage to bring Religion again into credit among us. The Floods of temptation which have carried away the work of many sandy Builders in our dayes, into the Sea of Errour and Irreligion, have not been able to shake the Truth out of your Judgement, nor the practice of Piety out of your Conversation; so strongly founded is your building on a judicious knowledge of the Truth, and close pinned together by a sincere love of what you know. *Madam*, This, had I nothing else, were enough to make me ambitious of having a name so honourable to patronize my weak labours; yet should I not have presumed, had not the many Favours, received from your Noble Hand, obliged me to attempt some way of expressing my Gratitude; and this I hope, will not be thought the worse, because it is so publick; your munificent Nobleness hath been such, that I cannot call in too many Witnesses to the acknowledgement of my Obligations.

✓ As for this *Treatise* which I humbly present to your Honours hands, in every Page of it you will find enough to exercise your Candour towards the unworthy Author: But the Subjects treated of, are such, as I am sure will relish well on your spiritual palate. I lead not your Honour into the dusty road of Controversies, which hath made Christians so unsociable, and keep aloof one from another, though travelling all to the same Heaven: But into the green paths of practical Divinity, where all sincere souls can agree to walk together. They all unite in the ultimate object of their hope; viz. Heaven and Salvation: Not the World in Hand, but Heaven in hope, brings them in their joy. The *Holy Scriptures* is their *Libellus in Angulo* (as once a devout soul for himself said) Never is the sincere Christian more solaced, than when he can get out of the Worlds noise, to spend a little time in a Corner in reading or meditating on this Book of Books. ✓ And they have all one haunt, where they seldom fail to meet one another daily, though as to their bodily presence they be scattered over the face of the whole Earth, and that is *Prayer*. These, *Madam*, are the three most general Subjects discoursed on in this Treatise. I confess I chose in them a Bow too strong for my weak Arm to draw; but the Mark which I levell'd at in handling, and now in publishing them, I hope is right. May any thing in these Papers encrease the rejoicing of your hope, make you more mighty in the Scriptures, and blow up the Holy fire, that already burns on the Altar of your devout soul, or any other of the faithful; I shall then have my option, and bless God for it. I shall no further oppress your Honours patience: The good Lord yet lengthen out your dayes, strengthen your faith, and multiply your graces, that at last you may dye like the *Phoenix*, amidst their sweet odours; and close your eyes in peace, with full assurance to open them again at the Morning of the Resurrection to see your Redeemer with joy unspeakable, and endless. So prayeth,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

August 28. 1661.

WILLIAM GURNALL

PART

PART III.

EPHES. 6. 17. *And take the Helmet of Salvation.*

THese words present us with another Piece in the Christians *Panoply*. A *Helmet* to cover his head in the day of battel. It makes the fifth in the *Apostles* order. And which is observable, This with most of the Pieces in this Magazine are *Defensive Arms*, and all to defend the Christian from sin, none to secure him from suffering.

First, They are most defensive Arms. Indeed there is but one of all the Pieces in the whole *Panoply* for offence, i. e. *The Sword*. It may be to give us this hint, That this spiritual War of the Christian lies chiefly on the defence, and therefore requires Arms most of this kind to wage it. God hath deposited a rich treasure of grace in every Saints heart; as this is the Devils great spight, to plunder him of which, and with it of his happiness, he commenceth a bloody war against him: So that the Christian overcomes his enemy, when himself is not overcome by him. He wins the day when he doth not lose his grace; his work being rather to keep what is his own, than to get what is his enemies. And truly this one thing well heeded, that the Saints war lies chiefly on the defence, would be of singular use to direct the Christian how to manage his Combats both with Satan, and also with his instruments. *First*, With Satan. Look Christian, thou standest always in a defensive posture, with thy armour on, as a souldier upon thy Works ready to defend the Castle of thy soul which God hath set thee to keep, and valiantly to repel Satans assaults when ever he makes his approach. But be not perswaded out of the Line of thy place and calling that God hath drawn about thee. No, not under the specious pretence of zeal, and hope to get the greater victory by falling into the enemies Quarters. Let Satan be the Assailant, and come if he will to tempt thee; but go not thou in a bravado to tempt him to do it. It is just he should be foiled, that seeks his own danger. This got *Peter* his fall in the High Priests Hall, who was left therefore cowardly to deny his Master, that he might learn humbly to deny himself ever after. *Secondly*, With Satans Instruments. May be they revile and reproach thee. Remember now thy part lies on the defence. Give not railing for railing, reproach for reproach. The Gospel

allows thee no liberty to use their weapons, and return them *quid pro quo*, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9. *Be pitiful; be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.* Thou hast here a Bridle and Breast-plate to defend thee from their bullets; the comfort of thy own sincerity and holy walking with which thou maist wipe off the dirt thrown upon thy own face, but no weapon for self-revenge. A shield is put into thy hand, which thou maist lift up to quench their fiery darts, but no darts of bitter words to retort upon them. Thou art shod with peace that thou maist walk safely upon the injuries they do thee, without any prick or pain to thy spirit, but not with pride to trample upon the persons that wrong thee.

Secondly, As most of the Pieces are defensive, so all of them to defend from sin, none to secure the Christian from suffering. They are to defend him in suffering, not privilege him from it. He must prepare the more for suffering, because he is so well furnished with Armour to bear it. Armour is not given for men to wear by the fire-side at Home, but in the Field. How shall the Maker be praised, if the Metal of his Arms be not known? And where shall it be put to the proof, but amidst Swords and Bullets? He that desires to live all his days in an *Isle of Providence*, where the whole year is Summer, will never make a good Christian. Resolve for hardship, or lay down thine Arms. Here is the true Reason why so few come at the Beat of Christs Drum to his Standards; and so many of those few that have lifted themselves by an external profession under him, do within a while drop away, and leave his Colours; it is suffering work they are sick of. Most men are more tender of their skin, than conscience; and had rather the Gospel had provided Armour to defend their Bodies from death and danger, than their souls from sin and Satan.

But I come to the words, *And take the Helmet of Salvation*: In which we may observe,

1. The Copulative that clasps this to the former piece, [*And*]
2. The Piece of Armour it self, *The Helmet of Salvation*.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the Concatenation of Graces, in their Birth, Growth, and Decay is set forth.

First, **T**he Copulative [*And*] *And take*, That is, with the shield of Faith, and all the other pieces of Armour here set down, take this also into the Field with you. See here how every grace is lovingly coupled to its Fellow; and all at last, though many pieces make but one suit; though many links,

yet make but one Chain. The Note which this points at, is, The Concatenation of Graces.

Note. The sanctifying saving graces of Gods Spirit, are link't inseparably together; there is a connexion of them one to the other; and that in their Birth, Growth, and Decay.

SECT.

SECT. I.

First, In their Birth. Where one sanctifying grace is, the rest are all to be found in its company. It is not so in common gifts and graces; these are parcel'd out, like the gifts *Abraham* bestowed on the Children he had by his Concubines, *Gen. 25. 6.* One hath this gift, another hath that, none hath all. He that hath a gift of knowledge, may want a gift of utterance, and so of the rest. But sanctifying graces are like the inheritance he gave to *Isaac*; every true Believer hath them all given him. *He that is in Christ, is a new creature, and behold all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17.* Now the new creature contains all; as natural corruption is an universal principle of all sin that sowes the whole lump of mans nature; so is sanctifying grace an universal principle that sweetly seasons, and renews the whole man at once, though not wholly. Grace comes (saith one) into the soul, as the soul into the body at once. Indeed it grows by steps, but is born at once; the new creature hath all its parts formed together, though not its degrees: Some one grace may (we confess) be perceived to stir, and so come under the Christians notice before another. He may feel his fear of God putting forth it self in a holy trembling at, and awe upon his spirit at the thoughts of God, before he sees his faith in the fiduciary recumbency of his soul upon God; yet the one grace is not in its production before the other. One part of the World hath been discovered to us long after the other; yet all the World was made together. Now this connexion of graces in their Birth, is of double use.

Use 1. First, To relieve the sincere Christian when in doubt of his gracious state, because some one grace which he enquires for, cannot at present be discerned in his soul by him. Possibly it is faith thou hast been looking for, and it is not at any hand to be heard of. Well Christian, do not presently unfaint thy self, till thou hast made further tryal of thy self. Send out therefore thy Spies to search for some other grace, as thy love to Christ; may be thou wilt hear some tydings of this grace, though the other is not in view. Hath not thy love to God and Christ been seen by thee in such a temptation, chasing it away with *Joseph's* Answer to his wanton Mistress, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Yea, maist thou not see it all the day long either in thy sincere care to please him, or hearty sorrow when thou hast done any thing that grieves him? in which two veins runs the life-blood of a souls love to Christ. Now know to thy comfort, That thy love can tell thee news of thy faith. As Christ said in another case, *He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father, Joh. 14. 9.* so say I to thee, Thou that hast seen thy love to Christ, hast seen thy faith in the face of thy love.

But may be, thy love to Christ is also lodg'd in a cloud. Well, then see whether thou canst spy no Evangelical repentance, loathing thee with the sight of thy sins, as also in firing thee with revenge against them, as those enemies which drew thee into rebellion against God; yea, were the bloody weapons

with which thou hast so oft wounded the Name, and murdered the Son of God. Behold, the grace thou lookest for, stands before thee; what is love to God, if zeal against sin as Gods enemy, be not? Did not *Abishai* love *David*, when his heart boyled so over with rage against *Shimei* for cursing *David*, that he could not contain, but breaks out into a passion, saying, *Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the King? let me go over I pray thee, and take off his head?* 2 Sam. 16. 9. and by thy own acknowledgement, it troubles thee as much to hear thy lusts bark against God, and thy will is as good to be the death of them, if God would but say his fiat to it, as ever *Abishai's* was to strike that Traytors head off his shoulders. And yet art thou in doubt whether thou lovest God or no? Truly, then thou canst not see fire for flame, love for zeal. Thus, as by taking hold of one Link, you may draw up the rest of the Chain that lies under water, so by discovering one grace, thou maist bring all to light. *Joseph* and *Mary* were indeed deceived, when they supposed their son to be in the company of their kindred, *Luke 2. 41.* but so canst thou not here; for this holy kindred of graces go ever together; they are knit as members of the body, one to another: Though you see only the face of a man, yet you doubt not but the whole man is there.

Secondly, As it may relieve the sincere Christian; so it will help to uncase and put the Hypocrite to shame, who makes great pretences to some one grace, when he hates another at the same time. A certain note of a false heart: he never had any grace, that loves not all graces. *Moses* would not out of *Egypt* with half his company, *Exod. 10.* Either all must go, or none shall stir: Neither will the Spirit of God come into a soul with half of his sanctifying graces, but with all his Train. If therefore thy heart be set against any one grace, it proves thou art a stranger to the rest; and though thou maist seem a great admirer and lover of one grace, yet the defiance thou standest in to others, washeth off the paint of this fair cover: Love and hatred are of the whole kind; he that loves or hates one Saint as such, doth the same by every Saint: So he that cordially closeth with one grace, will find every grace endeared to him upon the same account; for they are as like one to another, as one beam of the Sun is to another beam.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Sanctifying graces are connex'd in their growth and decay, encrease one grace, and you strengthen all; impair one, and God will be a loser in all; and the reason is, because They are reciprocally helpful each to other. So that when one grace is wounded, the assistance it should and would (if in temper) contribute to the Christians common stock, is either wholly detained, or much lessened; when love cools, obedience slackens, and drives heavily, because it wants the oyl on its wheel that love used to drop; obedience faltering, faith weakens apace; how can there be great faith, where there is little faithfulness? faith weakening, hope presently wavers; for

for it is the credit of faith's report, that hope goes on to expect good from God; and hope wavering, patience breaks, and can keep shop-windows open no longer, because it trades with the stock hope lends it. In the body you observe, there are many members, yet all make but one body; and every member so useful, that the other are beholden to it: So in the Christian there are many graces, but one new creature; and the eye of knowledge cannot say to the hand of faith, I have no need of thee; nor the hand of faith to the foot of obedience; but all are preserved by the mutual care they have of one another; For as ruine to the whole City may enter at a breach in one part of its Wall, and the soul run out through a wound in a particular member of the body; so the ruine of all grace, may, yea, must needs follow on the ruine of any one. There is indeed a stronger bond of necessity between graces of our souls, than there is between the members of our body. 'Tis possible, yea ordinary for some member to be cut off from the body, without the death of the whole, because all the members of the body are not vital parts. But every grace is a vital part in the new creature, and so essential to its very being, that its absence cannot be supplied *per vicarium*. In the body, one eye can make a shift to do the office of its fellow which is put out; and one hand do the others work that is cut off, though may be not so exactly; but faith cannot do the office of love, nor love the work of obedience; The lack of one wheel, spoils the motion of the whole Clock: And if one grace should be wanting, the end would not be attained for which this rare piece of workmanship is set up in the Saints heart.

Inference. First, Let it learn thee (Christian) this wisdom, whenever thou findest any grace weakened, either through thy negligence not tending it, or Satans temptations wounding it, speedily to endeavour the recovery of it: Because thou dost not only lose the comfort, which the exercise of this one grace might bring; but thou weakenest all the other.

Is he a bad Husband, who hazards the fall of his house, by suffering a hole or two in the roof go unrepaired? what then art thou that puttest thy whole gracious state in danger, by neglecting a timely repair of the breach made in any one of thy graces?

And so when thou art tempted to any sin, look not on it as a single sin, but as having all other sins in its belly. Consider what thou dost, before thou gratifiest Satan in any one motion; for by one sin thou strengthenest the whole body of sin; give to one sin, and that will send more beggars to your

door, and they will come with a stronger plea than the former; another, why mayst thou not do this for them, as well as that? thy best way is to keep the door shut to all, lest, while thou intendest to entertain only one, all crowd in with it: But if it were possible that thou couldst break this connexion of sin, so as to take off one link that pleaseth thee best, and not draw the whole chain after thee by committing this, yet know there is a connexion of guilt also, James 2. 10. *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* As he that administheth to the estate of one deceased, though it be never so little that he takes into his hands, becomes liable to pay all his debts; and brings all his Creditors upon him: So by tampering but with one sin, and that a little one, thou bringst the whole Law upon thy back, which will arrest thee upon Gods suit, as a trespasser and transgressor of all its commands. A man cannot stab any part of the face, but he will disfigure the whole countenance, and wrong the whole man. Thus the Law is copulative; an affront done to one, redounds to the dishonour of all, and so is revented by God the Law-giver, whose authority is equally in all.

Secondly, This may comfort those who trouble themselves with the thoughts of future changes which may befall them, and so alter the Scene of their affairs, as to call them to act a part they never much thought upon; and what shall they do then, say they? Now (blessed be God) they make a shift to serve God in their place; but what if freights come? Poverty, Sickness, or other Crosses, make a breach in their bank? how alas, shall they then behave themselves? where is their faith, patience, contentation, and other suffering graces, that should enable them to walk on these waves without sinking? They fear alas, little of these suffering graces is in their hands for such a time: Well Christian, for thy encouragement, know, if the graces of thy present condition, those I mean which God calls thee to exercise now in thy prosperous state be lively, and quit themselves well, thou mayest comfortably hope the other suffering graces which now stand unseen behind the Curtain, will do the same, when God changeth the Scene of thy Affairs, and calls them upon the Stage to act their part. The more humble thou art now with thy abundance, the more patient thou wilt certainly shew thy self in thy penury; so much as thy heart is now above the worlds enjoyments, even so much thou wilt then be above the troubles and sorrows of it. Trees they say, grow proportionably under-ground, so what they do above-ground; And the Christian will find something like this in his graces.

CHAP. II.

Of the nature of Hope, why styled Hope of Salvation, and why compared to an Helmet.

WE have done with the connexive particle, whereby this piece is coupled to the former, and now come to address our discourse to the

piece of Armour it self. *Take the Helmet of Salvation.* Though we have not here (as in all the other) the grace expressed, yet we need not be long at a loss

for it, if we consult with another place, where our *Apostle* lends us a key to decypher his meaning in this: And none so fit to be Interpreter of the *Apostles* words, as himself; The place is, *1 Thes. 5. 8. And for an Helmet, the hope of Salvation*: So that without any further scruple, we shall fasten upon the grace of *Hope*, as intended by the Holy Ghost in this place. Now in order to a Treatise of this grace, it is requisite, that something be said by Explication, that may serve as a light set up in the Entry, to lead us the better into the several rooms of the point, which is to be the subject of our discourse; and this I shall do by shewing,

First, What Hope is.

Secondly, Why called, The hope of Salvation.

Thirdly, Why this Hope is compared to an Helmet.

S E C T. I.

First, A little to open the nature of this grace of hope, which will be best done by laying down a plain description of it, and briefly explicating the parts.

Hope is a Supernatural grace of God, whereby the believer through Christ, expects and waits for all those good things of the promise, which at present he hath not received, or not fully.

1. Here is the Author or efficient of it, *God*, who is called *the God of all grace*, *1 Pet. 5. 10.* That is, the giver and worker of all grace, both as to the first seed, and further growth of it. It is impossible for the creature to make the least pile of grains, or being made, to make it grow. And as impossible to produce the least seed of grace in the heart, or to add one cubit to the Stature of it. No, as God is the *Father of the rain*, by which the herbs in the Fields spring and grow, so also of those spiritual dews and influences, that must make every grace thrive and flourish. The *Apostle* in the former place teacheth us this, when he prays, that *God would perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle them*: And as of all grace in general, so of this in particular, *Rom. 15. 13.* where he is stiled the *God of hope*; and by whom, we abound in hope also.

2. It is a Supernatural, and thereby we distinguish it from the Heathens hope, which with the rest of their moral vertues, so far as any excellency were found in them, came from God (to whom every man that cometh into the world, is beholden for all the light he hath, *John 1. 9.*) and is but the remains of mans first noble principles; as sometimes we shall see a broken Turret or two stand in the midst of the ruins of some stately Palace demolished, that serves for little more than to help the Spectator to give a guess what goodly buildings once stood there.

Secondly, Hopes subject, The Believer. True hope is a Jewel that none wears but Christs Bride; a grace with which none is graced, but the believers soul; *Christless* and *hopeless*, are joyned together, *Ephes. 2. 12.* And here it is not amiss, to observe the order in which hope stands to Faith: In regard of time, they are not one before another; but in order of nature and operation, faith hath the precedency of hope. First, Faith closeth with the promise as a true

and faithful word; then hope lifts up the soul to wait for the performance of it; Who goes out to meet him, that he believes will not come? The promise is as it were Gods Love-Letter to his Church and Spouse, in which he opens his very heart, and tells all he means to do for her: Faith reads and embraceth it with joy, whereupon the believing soul by hope looks out at this window with a longing expectation to see her Husbands Chariot come in the accomplishment thereof: So *Paul* gives a reason of his own hope from his faith, *Acts 24. 14, 15.* and prays for the *Romans* faith in order to their hope, *Rom. 15. 13.*

Thirdly, Hopes object. First, in general, something that is good; if a thing be evil, we fear and flee from it; if good, we hope and wait for it. And here is one note of difference between it and faith; faith believes evil, as well as good; hope is conversant only about good. Secondly, It is the good of the promise, and in this, faith and hope agree; both their lines are drawn from the same centre of the promise. Hope without a promise, is like an Anchor without ground to hold by; it bears the promise on its name, *Acts 26. 6. I stand and am judged (saith Paul) for the hope of the promise*: So *David* shews where he moans his ship, and casts his Anchor, *I hope in thy Word, Psalm 119. 81.* True hope will trade only for true good. And we can call nothing so that the good God hath not promised; for the Promise runs thus, *No good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly, Ps. 84. 11.* Thirdly, all the good things of the promise. As God hath encircled all good in the promise, so he hath promised nothing but good; and therefore Hopes object is all that the promise holds forth; only as the matter of the promise hath more degrees of goodness, so Hope intends its act, and longs more earnestly for it. God he is the chief good, and the fruition of him is promised as the utmost happiness of the creature: Therefore true hope takes her chief aim at God, and makes after all other promises in a subserviency to heave and lift the soul nearer unto him. He is called *The hope of Israel, Jer. 17. 13.* There is nothing beyond God, the enjoying of which the Believer projects; and nothing short of God that he can be so content with, as for the enjoying of it, to be willing to give God a general and full discharge of what by promise he stands engaged to him for. Now because God is only enjoy'd fully and securely in Heavens Blissful State, therefore it is called *the hope of glory, Col. 1. 2, 7. of eternal life, Tit. 3. 7. and salvation, 1 Thes. 5. 7.*

Fourthly, and lastly, the object of hope, is the good of the promise, not in hand, but yet to be performed. Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? *Rom. 8. 24.* Futurity is intrinsecal to Hopes object, and distinguisheth it from Faith, which gives a present being to the promise, and is *ἐπιζήμιον ὑπόστασις, the subsistence of things hoped for, Heb. 11. 1.* The good of the promise hath a kind of subsistence by Faith in the soul: it is Heaven as it were in an interview; it brings the Christian and Heaven together, as if he were there already; hence they are said by faith to kiss and embrace the promise, *Heb. 11. 13.* as two friends when

when they meet; faith speaks in the present tense *We are Conquerours*, yea we are more than Conquerours; Hope in future, I shall. And lastly, I inferred, or not fully performed. Partial performance of the promise intends hope, but compleat, ends hope, and swallows it up in love and joy. Indeed either the full performance of the promise, or execution of the threatening, shuts out all hope. In Heaven the promise is paid, and hope dimis'd, because we have what was look'd for; and in Hell the threatening is fully inflicted, and therefore no hope to be found among the damned, because no possibility of release.

Fourthly, Hopes aid, by whose help and for whose sake it expects to obtain the promise, and that is *Jesus Christ*; it waits for all in and through him; he is therefore call'd *Our hope*, 1 Tim. 1. 1. because through him we hope for what is promised, both as the Purchaser, by whose death we have *hanc veniam sperandi*, leave and liberty to expect good from God, and by whose Spirit we have *virtutem sperandi*, ability to hope; so that both the *Merita* and *Divinitas*, the authority and strength to hope, comes from Christ; the former by the effusion of his blood for us, the latter by the infusion of his Spirit into us.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Why is the Christians hope filed *A hope of Salvation*?

A double reason is obvious. First, Because Salvation comprehends and takes within its circle the whole object of his hope. Salvation imports such a state of bliss, wherein meet eminently the mercies and enjoyments of all the promises, scattered some in one, and some in another; as at the Creation, the light which was first diffused through the firmament, was gathered afterward into the Sun. Cast up the particular summs of all the good things promised in the Covenant, and the Total which they amount unto is *Salvation*. The *ultima unitas* gives the denomination to the number, because it comprehends all; so Salvation the ultimate object of the Christians expectation, and that which comprehends the rest, denominates his *Hope*. Secondly, It is called *a hope of Salvation*, to distinguish it from the Worldlings hope, whose portion (Psal. 16.) is in this life, and so his hope also. 'Tis confels'd, that many of these will pretend to a hope of Salvation, but the truth is, they neither have right to it, nor are they very eager of it. They think themselves so well seated in this world, that if they might have their wish, it should be, That God would not remove them hence. Even when they say they hope to be saved, their consciences tell them they had rather stay here, than part with this world, in hope to mend themselves in the other. They blow up themselves into a hope and desire of salvation, more out of a dread of Hell, than liking of Heaven. None I think so mad among them, but had rather be saved, than damned; live in Heaven, than lie in Hell; yet the best of the whole pack, likes this world better than them both.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, The third enquiry is, Why *Hope* is compared to a *Helmet*? For which conceive a double Reason.

First, The *Helmet* defends the Head, a principal part of the body, from dint of Bullet and Sword: So this *hope of Salvation* defends the Soul, the principal part of man, and the principal faculties of that, whereby no dangerous (to be sure no deadly) impression can by Satan or sin be made on it. Temptations may trouble, but cannot hurt, except their darts enter the will, and leave a wound there, by drawing it to some consent and liking of them; from which this *Helmet of Hope*, if it be of the right make, and fits sure on the Christians head, will defend him. It is hard to draw him into any Treasonable practice against his Prince, who is both well satisfied of his favour at present, and stands also upon the stairs of *Hope*, expecting assuredly to be called up within a while to the highest preferment that the Court can afford, or his King give. No, the weapons of Rebellion and Treason, are usually forg'd and fashion'd in Discontents shop. When Subjects take themselves to be neglected and slighted by their Prince, think their preferments are now at an end, and must look for no great favours more to come from him; This softens them to receive every impression of Disloyalty that any Enemy to the King shall attempt to stamp them withal: As we see in the *Israelites*, who thinking the men of *Judah* (of whose Tribe the King was) had got a Monoply of his favour, and themselves to be shut out from sharing (at least equally) with them therein; how soon are they, even at a blast or two of *Sheba* his seditious Trumpet, made Rebels against their Sovereign? We have no part in *David* (saith *Sheba*) neither have we any inheritance in the son of *Jesse*; every man to his tents, O *Israel*! 2 Sam. 20. 1. and see how this Treason runs, ever like a Squib upon a Rope, vers. 2. Every man of *Israel* went up from after *David*, and followed *Sheba*. Thus, if once the soul fears it hath no part in God, and expects no inheritance from him, I know no sin so great, but it may at the sound of the Trumpeters Trumpet be drawn to commit.

Secondly, As the *Helmet* defends the Souldiers head from wounding, so his heart also from swooning. It makes him bold and fearless in battel, though amidst Swords and Bullets. *Goliath* with his *Helmet* of Brass and other furniture, how confidently and daringly did the man come on! as if he had been so inclosed in his Armour, that it was impossible any weapon could come near to deliver a message of death unto him. This made him carry his crest so high, and despise a whole Host, till at last he paid his life for his pride and folly. But here is a *Helmet*, that whoever wears it, need never be put to shame for his holyboasting. God himself allows him so to do, and will bear him out in this rejoycing of his hope. Isa. 49. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me. This made holy *David* so undaunted in the midst of his enemies. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear, Psal. 27. 3.

his hope would not suffer his heart so much as beat within him, for any fear of what they could do to him: He had this *Helmet of Salvation* on, and therefore he saith, *vers. 6. Mine head shall be lift up above mine enemies round about me.* A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now it is the proper office of Hope to do this for the Christian in times of any danger; *Luke 21.28. When these things come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your Redemption draweth nigh.* A strange time one would think, for Christ then to bid his Disciples lift up their heads in, when they see other mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, *vers. 26.* yet now is

the time of the rising of their sun, when others is setting, and blackness of darkness overtaking them; because now the Christians feast is coming, for which Hope hath saved its stomach so long, *Your redemption draweth nigh.*

Two things make the head hang down; fear, and shame; hope easeth the Christians heart of both these, and so forbids him to give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance.

And so much may suffice for Explication of the words.

I come now to lay down the one general point of Doctrine, from which our whole discourse on this piece of Armour, shall be drawn.

CHAP. III.

Of the use of Hope in the Christians Warfare, and of the high and noble exploits it raiseth the Christian to undertake.

Doct. **T**hat Hope is a grace of singular use and service to us all along our spiritual Warfare and Christian course. We are directed *To take the Helmet of Salvation:* And this not for some particular occasion and then hang it by, till another extraordinary streight calls us to take it down, and use it again: But we must take it so as never to lay it aside, till God shall take off this Helmet to put on a Crown of glory in the room of it. *Be sober, and hope to the end,* is the Apostle *Peter's* counsel, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* There are some Engines of War that are of use but now and then, as Ladders for scaling of a Town or Fort, which done, are laid aside for a long time, and not missed.

But the *Helmet* is of continual use. We shall need it as long as our War with Sin and Satan lasts. The Christian is not beneath hope, so long as above ground; nor above hope, so long as he is beneath Heaven. Indeed when once he enters the Gates of that glorious City; then farewell Hope, and welcome Love for ever, he may say with the holy Martyr, Armour becomes Earth, but Robes Heaven. Hope goes into the field, and waits on the Christian till the last battel be fought, and the field cleared, and then faith and hope together carry him in the Chariot of the Promise to Heaven door, where they deliver up his soul into the hands of Love and Joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the blissful presence of God.

But that I may speak more particularly of Hopes serviceableness to the Christian, and the several Offices it performeth for him; I shall reduce all to these four heads.

First, Hope puts the Christian upon high and noble Exploits.

Secondly, It makes him diligent and faithful in the meanest services.

Thirdly, It keeps him patient amidst the greatest sufferings.

Fourthly, It comforteth and quiets his spirit, when God stays longest before he comes to perform Promises. First of the first.

First, Hope of Salvation puts the Christian upon high and noble Exploits. It is a Grace born for great Actions. Faith and Hope are the two Poles on which all the Christians noble enterprizes turn. As carnal hope excites carnal men to their achievements which gain them any renown in the world; so is this heavenly hope influential into the Saints undertakings. What makes the *Merchant* sell House and Land, and ship his whole Estate away to the other end almost of the world, and this amidst a thousand hazards from Pirates, waves and winds, but *Hope* to get a greater by this bold adventure? What makes the daring *Souldier* rush into the furious battel upon the very mouth of death it self, but *Hope* to snatch Honour and Spoil out of its jaws? *Hope* is his *Helmet*, *Shield*, and all, which makes him laugh on the face of all danger. In a word, what makes the *Scholar* beat his brains so hard, sometimes with the hazard of breaking them, by over-straining his Parts with too eager and hot a pursuit of learning, but *Hope* of commencing some degrees higher in the knowledge of those secrets in nature that are lock't up from vulgar understandings? who when he hath attained his desire, is paid but little better for all his pains and study, that have worn nature in him to the stumps, than he is that tears the flesh off his hands and knees with creeping up some craggy Mountain, which proves but a barren, bleak place, to stand in, and wraps him up in the clouds from the sight of others, leaving him little more to please himself with but this, That he can look over other mens heads, and see a little further than they. Now if these peddling hopes can prevail with men to such fixed resolutions for the obtaining of these poor, sorry things, which borrow part of their goodness from mens fancy and imagination; How much more effectual must the Christians Hope of eternal life be to provoke him to the achievement of more noble exploits! Let a few instances suffice.

SECT. I.

First, This Hope raiseth in the Christian an Heroick resolution against those lusts that held him before in bondage. The *Israelites* who couched so tamely under their *Egyptian* Burthens, without any attempt made by them to shake off the *Oppressors* Yoke; when once *Moses* came from God to give them Hope of an approaching Salvation, and his report hath gain'd some credit to be believed by them, it is strange to see what a mighty change the impression of the new-conceived Hope, made upon them! On a sudden their metal returns, and their blood, that with anguish and despair had so long chilled, and been even frozen in their veins, grows warm again. They who before hardly durst let their groans be heard (so cowed were their spirits with hard labour) dare now, fortified with Hope, break open their Prison doors, and March out of *Egypt* toward the place of Rest promised, maugre all the power and wrath of enraged *Pharaoh*, who pursued them. Truly, thus it is with a soul in regard of Sins Bondage. O how impotent and poor-spirited is a soul void of this Heavenly Hope! what a tame slave hath Satan of him! He is the foot-stool for every base lust to trample upon. He suffers the Devil to back and ride him whether he pleaseth, without winching: No puddle so filthy, but Satan may draw him through it with a twine thread: The poor wretch is well enough contented with his ignoble Servitude, because he knows no better Master than him he serves, nor better wages than the swill of his sensual pleasures which his lusts allow him: But let the news of Salvation come to the ear of this Sin-deluded soul, and a spiritual eye be given him to see the transcendent glory thereof, with a crevice of hope set open to him, that he is the person that shall inherit it, if willing to make an exchange of Satan for Christ, and of the slavery of his lusts, for the liberty of his Redeemers service; O what havock then doth the Soul begin to make among his lusts! he presently vows the death of them all, and sets his head at work how he may soonest and most effectually rid his hands of them. *Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, 1 John 3. 3.* He now looks upon his lusts with no better eye than a captive Prince would do on his cruel Keepers, out of whose hands could he but make an escape, he should presently enjoy his Crown and Kingdom; and therefore meditates his utmost revenge upon them. There may be some hasty purposes taken up by carnal men against their lusts, upon some accidental discontent they meet with now and then in the prosecution of them: But alas, the Swords they draw against them, are soon in their sheaths again, and all the seeming fray comes to nothing in the end. They like *Esaú*, go out full and angry in a sudden mood, but a Present comes from their lusts that bribes them from hurting them; yea, so reconciles them to them, that as he did by his Brother, they can fall upon the necks of those lusts to kiss them, which a while before they threatned to kill; and all for want of a true hope of Heaven to out-bid the proffers their lusts make to appease their anger, which would never yield a peace

should be patcht up with them on such infinite hard terms as it must needs be, the loss of Eternal Salvation. He that hath a mind to provide himself with Arguments to Arm him against sins motions, need not go far to seek them: But he that handles this one well, and drives it home to the head, will not need many more. What is the sin this would not prosecute! Art thou tempted to any sensual lust? Ask thy hope what thou lookest to be in Heaven. And canst thou yield to play the beast on earth, who hop'st to be made like the pure and holy Angels in Heaven! Is it a sin of profit that bewitcheth thee? is not hope of Heaven a spell strong enough to Charm this Devil? Can Gold bear any sway with thee that hopest to be Heir of that City where gold bears no price? wherefore is that blissful place said to be paved with gold, but to let us know, it shall be there trampled upon as of no account? and wilt thou let it now lie in thy Heart, that will ere long be laid under thy Feet? Is it a sin of Revenge? dost thou not hope for a day when thy dear Saviour will plead thy Cause? and what needest thou then take his work out of his hand? Let him be his own Judge, that hath no Hope; the Judge when He comes, will take thy part.

SECT. II.

Secondly, This Hope ennobles and enables the Christian to contemn the present world, with all its pomp, treasure, and pleasure, to which the rest of the sons of men are every man of them basely enslaved, and held by the leg, as a Prisoner by his Chain. When once Faith makes discovery of Land that the Christian hath lying in Heaven, and by Hope he begins to lot upon it, as that which he shall shortly take up at his remove from Earth: truly then the price of this worlds felicity falls low in his account, he can sell all his hopes from it very cheap, yea he can part with what he hath in hand of this worlds growth (when God calls him to it) more freely than *Alexander* did the Cities he took; because when all this is gone, he shall leave himself a better hope than that great *Monarch* had to live upon. The hopes of Heaven leave a blot upon the world in the Christian thoughts. It is no more now to him, than the Asses were to appointed *Saul*. Story tells us of some *Turks*, who have upon the sight of *Mahometts* Tomb, put their eyes out, that they might not defile them (forsooth) with any common object after they had been blessed with seeing one so sacred. I am sure many a gracious soul there hath been, who by a prospect of Heavens glory, the Palace of the great God, set before the eye of their Faith, have been so ravished with the sight, that they have desired God even to seal up their eyes by death, with *Simeon*, who would not by his good will, have lived a day after that blessed hour in which his eyes had beheld the Salvation of God. *Abraham* was under the hope of this Salvation, and therefore, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange Country, for he looked for a City, which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, *Heb. 11. 9, 10.* *Canaan* would have liked him well enough, if God had not told him of a Heaven that he meant to give him, in comparison to which, *Canaan* is now but

h at *Cabul*, a dirty Land in his judgement. So *Paul* tells us not only the low thoughts he hath himself of the world, but as they agree with the common sense of all believers, whose hope is come to any consistency and settlement; *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour*, Phil. 3. 20. Mark, he sets the Saint with his back upon earth; and draws his reason from their hope, *from whence we look, &c.* Indeed he that looks on Heaven, must needs look off Earth. The souls eye can as little as the bodies eye, be above and below at the same time. Every man converseth most where he hopes for to receive his greatest gains and advantage. The *Publican* sits at the receipt of Custom, there comes in his gains: The Courtier stands at his Princes Elbow: The Merchant, if you will find him, look for him in his Ware-house, or at the Exchange: But the Christians Hope carries him by all these doors; Here's not my Hope (saith the soul) and therefore not my haunt: My Hope is in Heaven, from whence I look for the Saviour to come, and my Salvation to come with him; there I live, walk, and wait. Nothing but a steadfast, well-grounded hope of Salvation can buy off the Creatures worldly hopes. The heart of man cannot be in this world without a hope; and if it hath no hope for Heaven, it must of necessity take in at earth, and borrow one there, such as it can afford. What indeed can suit an earthly heart better than an earthly hope? And that which is a mans hope (though poor and peddling) is highly prized, and hardly parted with; as we see in a man like to drown, and hath only some Weed or Bough by the Banks side to hold by, he'll die with it in his hand rather than let go; he'll endure blows and wounds, rather than lose his hold: Nothing can take him from it, but that which he hopes may serve better to save him from drowning. Thus it is with a man whose hope is set upon the World, and whose happiness expected to be paid in from thence; O how such a one hugs and hangs about the World! you may as soon persuade a Fox to come out of his hole, where he hath taken Sanctuary from the Dogs: such a one to cast off his hopes! no, he is undone without this pelf, and that honour; it is that he hath laid up his Hopes in, and Hope and Life are ever kept in the same hand; scare and threaten him with what you will, still the mans heart will hold its own: Yea, throw Hell-fire into his bosome, and tell him this love of the World, and making Gold his Hope, will damn him another day, still he will hold to his way. *Felix* is a fit instance for this, *Acts* 24. 26. *Paul* preach'd a thundering Sermon before him; and though the Preacher was at the Bar, and *Felix* on the Bench, yet God so arm'd the Word, that he trembled to hear the Prisoner speak of righteousness, and judgement to come: Yet this man, notwithstanding his conscience was struggling with the fears of judgement, and some sparks of divine vengeance had taken fire on him, could at the same time befending out his heart on a covetous errand, to look for a bribe, for want of which he left that blessed Servant of God in his bloody enemies hands; for *vers.* 26. it is said, *He hoped that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him.* But he missed his Market;

for as a sordid hope of a little money made him barely refuse to deliver *Paul*; so the blessed hope which *Paul* had for another world, made him more honourably disdain to purchase his deliverance at his hands with a Bribe.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, This hope of Salvation where it is steadfast, makes the Christian active and zealous for God. It is called *A lively hope*, 1 Pet. 3. They are men of metal that have it; you may expect more from him than many others, and not be deceived. Why are men dull and heavy in the service of God? Truly because their hopes are so. Hopeless and lifeless go together. No marvel the work goes hardly off a hand, when men have no hope, or but little, to be well paid for their labour in doing of it. He that thinks he works for a Song (as we say) will not sing at his work (I mean, be forward and cheery in it.) The best Customer is sure to be served best and first; and him we count the best Customer, that we hope will be the best Pay-master: If God be thought so, we will leave all to do his business. This made *Paul* engage so deep in the service of the Gospel, even to lose his worldly friends, and lay his own life to stake; it was for the hope of the promise, *Acts* 26. 6. This made the other *Israelites* that feared God, follow the Trade of Godliness so close, *v.* 7. *Unto which promise, our twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.* Mark, they are both instant and constant, *in itinere*, they run with full speed, stretching themselves forth as in a Race, and this night and day; no stop nor halt in their way, but ever putting on: And what is it that keeps them in breath? even the hope that they shall at last come to that Salvation promised. Nothing better to exhortate and clear the soul of this dull slegm of sloth, and listlessness of spirit in the service of God, than Hope well improved and strengthened. It is the very Physick which the Apostle prescribes for this disease, *Heb.* 6. 11, 12. *We desire every one of you to shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful.*

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Hope begets in a Christian a holy impatience after further attainments, especially when it grows to some strength: The higher our hopes of Salvation rise, the more will our hearts widen and distend themselves in holy desires; *Rom.* 8. 23. *Not only they, but we our selves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* Methinks rejoycing would better become them for what they had already, than groaning for what they have not. Who may better stay long for their Dinner, than they who have their stomachs stay'd with a good Break-fast? This would hold in bodily food, but not spiritual. No doubt, the sweetness which they tasted from their first-fruits in hand, did cheer their spirits; but the thoughts of what was behind, made them groan. Hope waits

for all, and will not let the soul sit down contented, till all the Dilhes be on the board, till the whole Harvest that stands on the Field of the Promise, be reaped and well inned; yea, the more the Christian hath received in partial payments, the deeper groans Hope makes the soul fetch for what is behind: and that *First*, because these fore-tastes do acquaint the Christian more with the nature of those joys which are in Heaven, and so enlarge his understanding to have more raised conceptions of the felicity those enjoy that are arrived there: And the encreasing of his knowledge must needs enlarge his desires, and those desires break out into sad groans, to think what sweet Wine is drunk in full bowls by glorified Saints, and he live where only a sip is allowed, that doth not satisfy, but kindle his thirst. It is harder now for him to live on this side Heaven, than before he knew so much. He is like one that stands at the door, within which is a Company set at a rich Feast; he hears them how merry they are; through the Key-hole he sees what variety they have; and by a little which he licks from the Trenchers that are brought out, is sensible how delicious their fare is: O how such a ones teeth would water after their cheer, which another misleth not, that hears not of it, or only hears, and tastes not of their Daupies! The nearer the soul stands to Heaven; and the more he knows of their joys, the more he blesteth them, and pities himself. None long for Heaven more than those who enjoy most of Heaven; all delays now are exceedingly tedious to such. Their continual moan is, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?* The last year is thought longer by the Apprentice, than all his time before; because now it is nearer out; and if delays be so tedious, what then are desertions to such a soul, who hath had his hopes of Salvation raised high, by the sweet illapses of the Spirit, and fore-tastes of glory! No doubt *Moses* his death so nigh *Canaan*, after he had tasted of the fruit of the Land at the spies hand, was exceeding grievous. To lose a Child grown up, when we seem ready to reap our hopes conceived of him, is more than to part with two in the Cradle, that have not yet drawn out our expectations far. The Christian indeed cannot quite lose his hopes, yet he may have them nipt and set back, as a forward Spring, by after-claps of Winter weather, which pinches so much the more, because the warm beams of the Sun had made the Herbs come forth and disclose themselves: And so desertions from God do make the saddest impression upon those above all others, whose expectation had advanced far, and by the present sense of Divine goodness, been unfolded into a kind of rejoycing through Hope of Glory; now to meet with a damp from the frowns of the Almighty, and to be benighted by the withdrawing of

that light which did so ravish it, O how dreadful must this sudden change be to the soul!

Secondly, These present attainments of grace or comfort, they do imbolden the Soul to expect yet more, and so provoke the Christian to press on for the full payment of all: See both these in *David*, *Psal.* 63. 7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.* The present boon he hath got, makes him rejoyce in hope of what is yet to come, and by this scent he is carried out with full cry to pursue the Chase for more, as appears in the very next words *ver.* 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* And no wonder, if we consider, that God gives his people their experiences with this very Notion stamped on them, i. e. to raise their expectations for further mercies at his hand, *Hos.* 2. 15. *I will give her her Vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope.* God is there speaking to a soul converted and newly taken into Covenant, what blessings he will bestow on it, as the happy effects of its Reconciliation to God, and Marriage with Christ, and he alludes to his dealing with *Israel*, who came out of a desolate Wilderness (where they had wandred, and endured unspeakable hardship forty years) into a pleasant, fruitful Country, in the very entrance whereof this *Achor* lay, which when God gave them, he would not have them look on it as in it self it was a little spot of ground, and not so much worth, but as the opening of a door through which he would undertake to let them into the possession of the whole Land in process of time; which circumstance believed by them, made *Joshua* advance his Banners with so much courage against the proudest of his enemies, well knowing, man could not shut that door upon them which God had open'd to them. Thus every particular assistance God gives the Christian against any one corruption, is intended by God to be an *Achor*, a door of hope, from which he may expect the total overthrow of that cursed seed in his bosom: When he adds the least degree of strength to his grace or comfort, he gives us an *Achor*, or door of hope, that he will consummate both in glory; O what courage must this needs bring to thee (poor heart) in thy fears and faintings! *Paul* had many enemies at *Ephesus* to oppose him, but having an *effectual door open'd unto him* for his encouragement, he went on undauntedly, *1 Cor.* 16. 9. As an Army, when after stubborn resistance by the enemy, who labour what they can to keep them out, the Door or Gate of the City flies open, then the Souldiers press in again with a shout, *The City is their own.* Thus when after long tugging, and much wrestling with God for pardon of sin, or strength against sin, the door of the promise flies open, and God comes in with some assisting, comforting presence, now hope takes heart, and makes the soul fall on with double force and zeal.

CHAP. IV.

Sheweth, *How Hope makes the Christian content with, and faithful in the meanest place, and lowest employment that God orders for him.*

Secondly, As Hope raiseth the Christians spirit to attempt great exploits, so it makes him faithful in the meanest and lowest services; that the providence of God calls him to: for the same providence lays out every one his work and calling, which sets bounds for their habitations on the Earth. Some he sets on the high places of the Earth, and appoints them Honourable employments, suitable to their place: Others he pitcheth down on lower ground, and orders them in some obscure corner to employ themselves about work of an inferior nature all their life; and we need not be ashamed to do that work which the great God sets us about. The *Italians* say true, *No man forsake his hands in doing his own business.* Now, to encourage every Christian to be faithful in his particular place, he hath made promises that are applicable to them all. Promises are like the beams of the Sun, they shine as freely in at the Window of the poor mans Cottage, as of the Princes Palace. And these *Hope* trades with; and from these animates the Christian at his work; indeed we are no more faithful in our callings, than acted by Faith and Hope therein. Now you shall observe, God lays his promise, so as it may strengthen our hands and hearts against the chief discouragement that is most like to weaken them in their callings. The great discouragement of those high and publick employments, *Magistracy* and *Ministry*, is the difficulty of the *Province*, and opposition they find from the angry world. These therefore are guarded and supported with such promises as may fortifie their hearts against the force and fury with which the world comes forth to oppose them: *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; be strong, and be of good courage, Josh. 1. 5.* which was given to *Israels* chief *Magistrate*. And the *Ministers* promise suits well with this, as having ordinarily the same difficulties, enemies, and discouragements, *Go teach all Nations;* and, *Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Matth. 28. 20.* Again, the temptation that usually haunts persons in low and more ignoble Callings, is the very meanness of them, which occasions discontent and envy in some, to see themselves on the floor, and their brother prefer'd to more honourable services; in others, dejection of spirit, as if they were, like the *Eunuch*, but dry Trees, unprofitable, and brought no glory to God, while others, by their more eminent places and callings, have the advantage of being highly serviceable to God in their generations. Now to arm the Christian against this temptation, and remove this discouragement, God hath annexed as great a reward in

the promise to his faithfulness in the meanest employment, as the most honourable is capable of. What more mean and despicable than the Servants employment? yet no less than Heaven it self is promised to them, if faithful, *Col. 3. 22.* (he is speaking there to such,) *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord; and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.* Where observe, First, what honour he puts on the poor servants work, *He serves the Lord Christ;* yea, in the lowest piece of work that belongs to his Office: his drudgery is Divine service, as well as his praying and hearing; for he saith, *Whatsoever ye do.* Again, observe, The reward that is laid up for such, and that is as great, as he shall receive that hath been faithful in ruling Kingdoms; *the reward of the inheritance.* As if God had said, Be not, O my child, out of love with thy course, homely work; ere long thou shalt sit as high, as he that sways Scepters; though your employment now be not the same with his, yet your acceptation is the same, and so shall your reward also be. Thus we see, as we bestow more abundant honour on those members of our body, which we think less honourable, so doth Christ with those members of his body, which by reason of their low place in the world, may be thought to be most despised, he puts an abundant honour upon them in his promise. And where Hope is raised, the Christian cannot but take sweet satisfaction from the expectation thereof: The poor Plough-man that is a Saint, and ploughs in hope of reaping Salvation, would be as well contented with his place and work, as the bravest Courtier is with his. Think of this, when any of you have a Servant to choose, if you would have your work faithfully and heartily done, employ such about it (if they be to be had) as have a hope of Salvation: This will not suffer them to wrong you, though they could: their Helmet will defend them from such temptations. *Jacob* was a true drudge for his Master *Laban* by day and by night, though he used him none of the best, in chopping and changing his wages so oft; but *Jacob* served in hope, and expected his reward from a better Master than *Laban*; and this made him faithful to an unfaithful man. *Joseph* would not wrong his Master, though at the request of his Mistress; he chose to suffer his unjust anger, rather than accept of her unchaste love. The evidence of this grace in a servant, is better security for his faithfulness, than a Bond of a thousand pounds.

CHAP. V.

Sheweth the mighty influence Hope hath upon the Christian to support him in his afflictions, in particular, what help it gives, and how.

THirdly, This hope of Salvation supports the Soul in the greatest afflictions. The Christian's patience is, as it were, his back, on which he bears his burdens; and some afflictions are so heavy, that he needs a broad one to carry them well. But if Hope lay not the Pillow of the promise between his back and his burthen, the least cross will prove unsupportable: Therefore it is called *The patience of hope*, 1 Thess. 1. 3. There is a patience, I confess, and many know not a better, when men force themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles, because they cannot help it, and there is no hope. This I may call a desperate patience, and it may do them some service for a while, and but for a while. If Despair were a good cure for troubles, the damned would have more ease; for they have despair enough, if that would help them. There is another patience also very common in the world, and that is a blockish, stupid patience, which, like *Nabal's* mirth, lasts no longer than they are drunk with ignorance and senselessness: for they no sooner come to themselves to understand the true state they are in, but their hearts die within them: But the patience of hope, we are now treating of, is a sober grace, and abides as long as hope lasts; when hope is lively and active, then it floats, yea even danceth aloft the waters of affliction, as a right sound ship doth in a tempestuous Sea; but when hope springs a leak, then the billows break into the Christians' bottom, and he sinks apace, till hope, with much labour at the Pump of the promise clears the soul again. This was *David's* very case, Psal. 69. 1. *Save me, for the waters come into my soul.* What means he by coming into his soul? Surely, no other than this; that they oppressed his spirit, and as it were sued into his very conscience, raising fears and perplexities there, by reason of his sins, which at present put his faith and hope to some disorder, that he could not for a while, see to the comfortable end of his affliction, but was as one under water, and covered with his fears; as appears by what follows, vers. 2. *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.* He compares himself to one in a quagmire, that can feel no firm ground to bear him up; and observe whence his trouble rose, and where the waters made their entrance, vers. 5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sin are not hid from thee.* This holy man lay under some fresh guilt, and this made him so uncomfortable under his affliction, because he saw his sin in the face of that, and tasted some displeasure from God for it in his outward trouble, which made it so bitter in the going down; and therefore when once he hath humbled himself in a mournful confession of his sin, and was able to see the coast clear betwixt Heaven and him, so as to believe the pardon of his sin, and hope for good news from God again, he then returns to his sweet temper, and can

sing in the same Affliction; where before he did sink.

SECT. I.

hope in affliction

But more particularly I shall shew what powerful influence hope hath on the Christian in affliction, and how. *First*, What influence it hath.

First, It stills and silenceth him under affliction. It keeps the King's peace in the heart, which else would soon be in an uproar. A hopeless soul is clamorous; one while it chargeth God, another while it reviles instruments. It cannot long rest, and no wonder, when hope is not there to rock it asleep. Hope hath a rare art in stilling a froward spirit, when nothing else can; as the Mother can make the crying Child quiet by laying it to the Breast, when the Rod makes it cry worse. This way *David* took, and found it effectual; when his soul was out of quiet, by reason of his present affliction, he lays his soul to the Breast of the promise, *Why art thou disquieted, O my Soul, within me? Hope thou in God*, Psal. 42. And here his soul sweetly sleeps, as the Child, with the Teat in its mouth: And that this was his usual way, we may think by the frequent instances we find to this purpose; thrice we find him taking this course in two *Psalms*, 42, and 43. When *Aaron* and *Miriam* were so uncivil with *Moses*, and used him so ill in their foul language, no doubt it was a heavy affliction to the spirit of that holy man, and aggravation of his sorrow; to consider out of whose bow those sharp Arrows came; yet it is said, *Moses held his peace*, waiting for God to clear his innocency; and his patience made God, no doubt, the more angry to see this meek man wronged, who durst trust him with the righting of his Name, and therefore with such speed he wiped off the dirt they had thrown on him, before it could soak in to the prejudice of his good name in the thoughts of others. Indeed this waiting on God for deliverance in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence; Psal. 62. 1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from him cometh my salvation:* or as the Hebrew, *My soul is silent.* It is a great mercy, in an affliction that is sharp, to have our bodily senses, so as not to lie raving or roaring, but still and quiet; much more to have the heart silent and patient. And we find the heart is as soon heat into a distemper, as the head. Now what the Sponge is to the Cannon when hot with often shooting in, that is Hope to the Soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit, and meekens it, that it doth not flie apieces, and break out into distemper'd thoughts or words against God.

Secondly, This hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath;

breath; it is called *The rejoicing of Hope*, Heb. 3. 6. And hope never affords more joy than in affliction; it is on a watry cloud that the Sun paints those curious colours in the Rain-bow. Rom. 5. 3. *Rejoyce in the hope of glory, and not only so, but we glory in tribulation.* Glorifying, is rejoicing in a ravishment, when it is so great, that it cannot contain it self within the Christians own breast, but comes forth in some outward expression, and lets others know what a Feast it sits at within. The Springs of comfort lie high indeed, when his joy pours out at the mouth: And all this joy, with which the suffering Saint is entertain'd, is sent in by hope at the cost of Christ, who hath provided such unspeakable glory for them in heaven, as will not suffer them to piny or bemoan themselves for those tribulations that befall them on the way to it. *Dum mala puniunt, bona promissa ungunt.* Hope breaks the *Alabaſter-box* of the promise over the Christians head, and so diffuseth the consolations thereof abroad the soul, which like a precious ointment, have a vertue as to exhilarate and refresh the spirit in its faintings, so to heal the wounds, and remove the smart, which the Christians poor heart may feel from its affliction, according to the *Apostle* in the fore-mentioned place, Verſ. 5. *Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.* There are two graces, which Christ useth above any other, to fill the soul with joy; and they are faith and hope, because these two fetch all their wine of joy without doors: Faith tells the soul what Christ hath done for it, and so comforts it; hope revives the soul with the news of what Christ will do; both draw at one Tap, Christ and his promise; whereas the other graces present the soul with its own inherent excellencies; what it doth and suffers for him, rather than what he for them: So that it were neither honourable for Christ, nor safe for the Saint, to draw his joy from this Vessel. Not honourable to Christ! This were the way to have the Kings Crown set on the Subjects head, and cry *Hosanna* to the grace of Christ in us, which is due only to the mercy of God to us; for thither we will carry our praise, whence we have our joy; and therefore upon our Allegiance we are only to rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3. 3. And it would be no more safe for us, than honourable for him; because of the instability of our hearts, and unconstant actings of our graces, which are as oft ebbing as flowing; and so our joy could not be constant, because our graces are not; but as these Springs lie high or low, so would this rise and fall; yea, we were sure to drink more Water than Wine, oftner want joy than have it; whereas now the Christians Cup need never be empty, because he draws his Wine from an undrainable Fountain, that never sends any poor soul away ashamed, as the brook of our inherent grace would certainly, at one time or other, do.

S E C T. II.

Quest. But whence hath Hope this vertue? or what are the ingredients in Hopes Cordial that thus exhilarates the Saints Spirit in Affliction?

Ans. 1. First, Hope brings certain news of a

happy issue, that shall shortly close up all the wounds made by his present sufferings. When God comes to save his afflicted servants, though he may anticipate their hopes, and surprize them before they looked for him, yet he doth not come unlookt for; Salvation is that they lot upon; Jerem. 29. 11. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* That is, an end suitable to the hopes and expectations taken up by you. Hope is a prying grace, it is able to look beyond the exterior transactions of providence: It can by the help of the promise, peep into the very bosome of God, and read what thoughts and purposes are writ there concerning the Christians particular estate, and this it imparts to him, bidding him not be at all troubled to hear God speaking roughly to him in the language of his providence; for faith hope, I can assure thee he means thee well, whatever he saith that sounds otherwise: For as the law which came hundreds of years after the promise made to Abraham, could not disannul it; so neither can any intervening afflictions make void those thoughts and counsels of love, which so long before have been set upon his heart for thy deliverance and salvation. Now such a one must needs have a great advantage above others for the pacifying and satisfying his spirit concerning the present proceedings of God towards him; because though the actings of God upon the outward stage of providence, be now sad and grievous; yet he is acquainted with heavens plot therein, and is admitted as it were into the attiring room of his secret counsel, where he sees garments of salvation preparing, in which he shall at last be clad, and come forth with joy. The Traveller, when taken in a storm, can stand patiently under a Tree while it rains, because he hopes it is but a shewre, and sees it clear up in one part of the heavens, while it is dark in another. Providence, I am sure, is never so dark and cloudy, but hope can see fair weather a coming from the promise; *When these things begin, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh*, Luke 21. 28. And that is as black a day as can come. When the Christians affairs are most disconsolate, he may soon meet with a happy change. The joy of that blessed day, 1 Cor. 15. 52. comes, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed.* In one moment sick and sad, in the next well and glad, never to know more what groans and tears mean. Now clad with the rags of mortal flesh, made miserable with a thousand troubles that attend it; in the twinkling of an eye arrayed with Robes of immortality, imbosled and enriched with a thousand times more glory than the Sun it self wears in that garment of light, which now dazzleth our eyes to look on. *It is but winking* (said a holy Martyr to his fellow sufferer in the fire with him) *and our pain and sorrow is all over.* Who can wonder to see a Saint cheerful in his afflictions, that knows what good news he looks to hear from heaven, and how soon he knows not? You have heard of the *Weapon Salve*, that it cures wounds at a distance; such a kind of salve is hope. The Saints hope is laid up in Heaven, and yet it heals all their wounds they receive

receive on earth. But this is not all; for as hope prophecies well concerning the happy end of the Christians afflictions, so it assures him he shall be well tended and looked to, while he lies under them. If Christ sends his Disciples to Sea, he means to be with them when they most need his company. The well child may be left a while by the Mother, but the sick one she will by no means stir from; *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*, Isa. 43. 2. You know what God said to Moses, when he was sick of his employment, and made so many mannerly, or rather unmannerly excuses from his own inability, and all that he might have leave to lay down his Commission; *Go, saith God, Exod. 4. 12. And I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.* And again, *vers. 14. Is not Aarons the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well, and also behold he cometh forth to meet thee.* Thus God did animate him, and toll him on to like that hard Providence he was called to. Methinks, I hear hope as Gods Messenger, speaking after the same sort to the drooping soul oppressed with the thoughts of some great affliction, and ready to conclude he shall never be able to stemm so rough a Tyde, bear up, and cheerfully lift up his head above such surging waves. Go O my soul (saith hope) for thy God will be with thee, and thou shalt suffer at his charge. Is not Christ thy Brother? yea, is he not thy Husband? He, thou thinkest, can tell how to suffer, who was brought up to the Trade from the Cradle to the Cross; Behold, even he comes forth to meet thee, glad to see thy face, and willing to impart some of his Suffering-skill unto thee. That man indeed must needs carry a heavy heart to prison with him, who knows neither how he can be maintained there, nor delivered thence: But hope easeth the heart of both these, which taken away, suffering is a harmles thing, and not to be dreaded.

Secondly, Hope assures the Christian not only of the certainty of Salvation coming, but also of the transcendency of this Salvation to be such, as the sorrow of his present sufferings bears no proportion to the joy of that. This kept the Primitive Christians from swooning, while their enemies let out their blood. They had the scent of this hope to exhilarate their spirits; 2 Cor. 4. 16. *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* Is not this strange, that their spirit and courage should encrease with the losing of their blood! What rare, unheard of Cordial, was this! See *vers. 17. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Behold here the difference betwixt hopes of heaven, and hopes of the world. These later, they are fanciful and slighty, seem great in hope, but prove nothing in hand; like Eves Apple, fair to look on, as they hang on the Tree, but sowre in the juice, and of bad nourishment in the eating. They are, as one calls them wittily, *Nothing between two dishes.* It were well if men could in their worldly hopes come but to the unjust Stewards reckoning, and for an hundred felicities they promise themselves from the enjoyments they pursue, find but fifty at last paid

them: No alas, they must not look to come to so good a Market, or have such fair dealings, that have to do with the creature, which will certainly put them to greater disappointments than so. They may blis themselves, if they please, for a while in their hopes, as the Husbandman sometimes doth in the goodly shew that he hath of Corn standing upon his ground; but by that time they have reaped their Crop, and threshed out their hopes, they will find little besides straw and chaff, emptiness and vanity to be left them: A poor return, God knows, to pay them for the expence of their time and strength which they have laid out upon them, much less suitable to recompence the loss he is put to in his conscience; for there are few who are greedy Hunters after the Worlds enjoyments, that do drive this their Worldly Trade without running in debt to their consciences. And I am sure, he buys Gold too dear, that pays the peace of his conscience for the purchase. But heaven is had cheap, though it be with the loss of all our carnal interests, even life it self. Who will grutch to part with a sorry Lease of a low-rented Farm, in which he also hath but a few days left before it expires, (and such our temporal life is) for the perpetuity of such an inheritance as is to be had with the Saints in light? This hath ever made the faithful servants of God carry their lives in their hands, willing to lay them down; *While they look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal,* *vers. 18. of the foregoing Chapter.*

Thirdly, As hope assures the soul of the certainty and transcendency of heavens Salvation, so also of the necessary subserviency, that his afflictions have towards his obtaining this Salvation; Luke 24. 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered those things, and to enter into his glory?* As if Christ had said, What reason have you so to mourn, and take on for your Masters death, as if all your hopes were now split and spilt? Ought he not to suffer? Was there any other way that he could get home, and take possession of his glory that waited for him in heaven? And if you do not grutch him his preferment, never be so inordinately troubled to see him onwards to it, though through the deep and miry Lane of Suffering. And truly the Saints way to salvation, lies in the same Road that Christ went in; Rom. 8. 17. *If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together;* only with this advantage, that his going before hath beaten it plain, so that now it may be forded, which but for him had been utterly unpassable to us. Afflictions understood with this notion upon them, that they are as necessary for our wastage to glory, as water is to carry the Ship to her Port (which may as soon sayl without water, as a Saint land in heaven, without the subserviency of afflictions;) This notion, I say, well understood, would reconcile the greatest afflictions to our thoughts, and make us delight to walk in their company. This knowledge *Parisienus* calls, *Unus de septem radiis doni scientia*, one of the seven beams of divine knowledge, for the want of which we call good evil, and evil good; think God blesteth us,

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when we are in the Sun-shine of prosperity, and curseth when our condition is over-cast with a few clouds of adversity; but hope hath an eye that can see heaven in a cloudy day, and an anchor that can find firm land under a weight of waters to hold by; it can expect good out of evil. The Jews open their windows when it thunders and lightens, expecting (they say) their Messiah to come at such a time to them. I am sure hope opens her window widest in a day of storm and tempest: *Zeph. 3. 12. I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in thee. And Micah the seventh, Therefore will I look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me.* See what strong hold hopes anchor takes, and it is a remarkable, *Therefore*, if you observe the place; because all things were at so desperate a pass in the Churches affairs, 'as there you will find them to be to mans thinking *therefore*, saith the Saint, *I will look, I will wait.* Indeed God doth not take the Axe into his hand to make Chips; his People, when he is hewing them, and the Axe goes deepest, they may expect some beautiful piece at the end of the work. It is a sweet meditation *Parisensis* hath upon *Rom. 8. 28. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Ubi magis intrepida, magis pensata esse debes, quam inter cooperarios meos, & coadjutores meos?* Where, O my soul, shouldst thou be more satisfied, free of care and fear, than when thou art among thy fellow-labourers, and those that come to help thee to attain thy so much desired Salvation, which thy afflictions do! They work together with Ordinances and other providential dealings of God for good, yea thy chief good; and thou couldst as ill spare their help as any other means which God appoints thee. Should one find, as soon as he riseth

in the morning, some on his house-top rearing off the Tiles, and with Axes and Hammers taking down the roof thereof, he might at first be amazed and troubled at the sight, yea think they are a company of thieves, and enemies come to do him some mischief; but when he understands they are work-men sent by his father to mend his House, and make it better than it is, (which cannot be done without taking some of it down) he is satisfied, and content to endure the present noise and trouble, yea thankful to his father, for the care and cost he bestows on him: The very hope of what advantage will come of their work, makes him very willing to dwell a while amidst the ruines and rubbish of his old house. I do not wonder to see hopeless souls so impatient in their sufferings sometimes even to distraction of mind; alas, they fear presently (and have reason so to do) that they come to pull all their Worldly joys and comforts down about their ears, which gone, what alas have they left to comfort them, who can look for nothing but Hell in another World? But the believers heart is eased of all this, because assured from the promise, that they are sent on a better errand to him from his Heavenly Father, who intends him no hurt, but rather good, even to build the ruinous frame of his soul into a glorious Temple at last, and these afflictions come, among other means, to have a hand in the work, and this satisfies him, that he can say, Lord, cut and hew me how thou wilt, that at last I may be polished and framed according to the Plat-form, which love hath drawn in thy heart for me. Though some ignorant man would think his cloaths spoiled when besmeared with Fullers Earth or Soap, yet one that knows the cleansing nature of them, will not be afraid to have them so used.

CHAP. VI.

wherein is shewed, That God stayes long before he performs some promises, and that it is Hopes Office then to keep the Christian in a waiting posture.

THE fourth and last Office of Hope propounded, is, to quiet and compose the heart, when the good things of the promise (so much longed for by the Christian) stay long before they are performed. Patience, I told you, is the back on which the Christians burdens are carried, and hope the pillow between the back and the burden, to make it sit ealie. Now patience hath two shoulders; one to bear the present evil, and another to forbear the future good promised, but not yet paid. And as hope makes the burden of the present evil of the cross light, so it makes the longest stay of the future good promised, short: Whereas without this, the Creature could have neither strength to bear the one, nor forbear and wait for the other; *Lam. 3. 18. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord;* implying thus much, That where there is no hope, there is no strength; the souls comfort lies drawing on, and soon gives up the ghost, where all hope fails. God undertook for *Israels* protection and provision

in the Wilderness; but when their Dough was spent, and their store ended, which they brought out of *Egypt*, they fall foul with God and Moses; and why, but because their hope was spent as soon as their Dough? *Moses* ascends the Mount, and is but a few dayes out of their sight, and in all haste they must have a Golden Calf; and why, but because they gave him for lost, and never hoped to see him more? This is the reason why God hath so few Servants that will stick fast to him, because God puts them to wait for what he means to give, and most are short-spirited, and cannot stay. You know what *Naomi* said to her daughters, *Ruth 1. 12, 13. If I should have a Husband, and should also bear sons, would you tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having Husbands?* The promise hath Salvation in the Womb of it; but will the unbeliever, a soul without heavenly hope, stay till the promise ripens, and this happiness be, as I may so say, grown up? No sure, they will rather make some match with the beggarly

beggarly creature, or any base lust which will pay them in some pleasure at present, than wait so long, though it be for heaven it self. Thus as *Tamar* play'd the Strumpet because the husband promised was not given her so soon as she desired, *Gen. 38.* so it is the undoing of many souls, because the comfort, joy, and bliss of the promise is with-held at present, and his people are made to wait for their reward; therefore they throw themselves into the embraces of this adulterous World that is present; *Demas hath forsaken me, and loved this present world;* 2 Tim. 4. 10. The soul only that hath this Divine hope, will be found patiently to stay for the good of the promise.

Now in handling this last Office of hope, I shall do these three things.

1. I shall shew you, That God oft stays long before he pays in the good things of the promise.
2. That when God stays longest before he performs his promises, it is our duty to wait.
3. That hope will enable the Soul to wait, when it stays longest.

SECT. I.

First, God often stayes long before he fulfills his promise to his people. The promise contains the matter of all our hopes, called therefore *the hope of the promise*. To hope without a promise, is to claim a debt that never was owing. Now the good things of the promise, are not paid down presently: indeed then there would not be such need of promises. What need of a Bond, where the money is presently paid down? God promised *Abraham* a Son, but he staid many years for him after the Bond of the promise was given him. He promised *Canaan* to him and his seed, yet hundreds of years interposed between the promise and performance. *Esaú* was spread into a Kingdom, before the Heirs of promise had their inheritance, or one foot of land given them in it. Yea, all the *Patriarchs* who were the third generation after *Abraham*, dyed, and received not the promise, *Hebr. 11. 13.* *Simeon* had a promise he should not see death, till he had seen the *Lords Christ*, *Luke 2. 26.* but this was not performed till he had one foot in the grave, and was even taking his leave of the World. In a word, those promises which are the portion of all the Saints, and may be claim'd by one as well as by another, their date is set in the Book of Gods Decree, when to be paid in to a day; some sooner, some later; but not expressed in the promise. He hath engaged to answer the prayers of his people, and fulfill the desires of those that fear him, *Psal. 145. 19.* But it proves a long voyage sometimes before the praying Saint hath the return of his adventure. There comes oft a long and sharp Winter between the sowing-time of prayer, and the reaping. He hears us indeed as soon as we pray, but we oft do not hear of him so soon. Prayers are not long on their journey to heaven, but long a coming thence in a full answer. Christ at this day in heaven, hath not a full answer to some of those prayers which he put up on Earth: Therefore he is said to expect till his enemies be made his footstool, *Heb. 10. 13.*

Promises we have for the subduing Sin and Satan under our feet, yet we find these enemies still skulking within us, and many a sad scuffle we have with them before they are routed and outed our hearts. And so of others; we may find sometime the Christian, as great an heir as he is to joy and comfort, hardly able to shew a penny of this heavenly Treasure in his Purse. And for want of well pondering this one Clause, poor souls are oft led into temptation, even to question their Saint ship. Such promises are the Saints portion, faith one, but I cannot find them perform'd to me, therefore I am none of them; many a prayer I have sent to heaven, but I hear no news of them. The Saints are Conquerors over their lusts, but I am yet often soyld and worsted by mine: There is a heaven of comfort in the promise; but I am as it were in the belly of hell, swallowed up with fears and terrors; such as these are the reasonings of poor souls in the distress of their spirits; whereas all this trouble they put themselves to might be prevented, if they had faith to believe this one principle of undoubted truth; That God performs not his promises all at once, and what they want in hand, they may see on the way coming to them.

SECT. II.

Secondly, When God stays long before he makes payment of the promise, then it is the believers duty to wait for it; *Habak. 2. Though it tarry, wait for it:* he is speaking there of the good of the promise, which God intended to perform in the appointed time; and because it might tarry longer than their hasty hearts would, he bids them wait for it. As one that promiseth to come to a friends house, sends him word to sit up for him, though he tarry later than ordinary, for he will come at last assuredly. This is hard work indeed! What? wait? When we have stay'd so long, and no sight of Gods coming, after this Prayer, and that Sermon; so many long looks given at the Window of his Ordinances and Providences, and no tydings to be heard of his approach in mercy and comfort to my soul, and after this, still am I bid wait? This is wearisome work. True, to flesh and blood it is; yea, weak faith is oft out of breath, and prone to sit down, or turn back, when it hath gone long to meet God in the returns of his mercy, and miseth of him; and therefore the *Apostle* ushers in this duty with an affectionate prayer, 2 Thess. 3. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* He had laid down a strong ground of consolation for them in the precedent Chapter, in that they were chosen to salvation, and called by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, *vers. 13, 14.* and assured them, that God who is faithful, would establish them, and keep them from evil, *vers. 5.* of this Chapter: he means so as they should not miscarry, and at last fall short of the glory promised: But being sensible how difficult a work it was for them amidst their own present weaknesses, the Apostasies of others, and the assaults of Satan upon themselves, to hold fast the assurance of their hope unto the end, he turns himself from them to speak to God

God for them, *The Lord direct your hearts* : and, as if he had said, 'tis a way you will never find, a work you will never be able of your selves thus to wait patiently till Christ come, and bring the full reward of the promise with him. The Lord therefore direct your hearts into it. And *Moses* it seems, before he ascended the Mount, had a fear and jealousy of what afterward proved too true ; that the *Israelites* unbelieving hearts would not have the patience to wait for his return, when he should stay some while with God there out of their sight ; to prevent which, he gave express command before he went up, That they should tarry there for him, *Exod. 24. 14.* Indeed a duty more contrary, than this of waiting quietly and silently on God, to our proud hearts, I know not. We can make the great God bear our manners, and lacquey after us, before we do what he commands, but if the promise comes not Galloping full speed to us, we think it will never be at us.

Quest. But, why doth God, when he hath made a promise, make his people stay so long ?

Ans. I shall answer this question by asking another : Why doth God make any promise at all to his creature ? This may be well asked, considering how free God was from owing any such kindness to his creature, till, by the meer good pleasure of his Will, he put himself into Bonds, and made himself, by his promise, a Debtor to his Elect ; And this proves the former question to be saucy and overbold. As if some great rich man should make a poor beggar, that is a stranger to him, his heir, and when he tells him this, he should ask, but why must I stay so long for it ? Truly, any time is too soon for him to receive a mercy from God, that thinks Gods time in sending it too late. This hasty spirit is as grievous to God, as his stay can be to us. And no wonder God takes it so heinously, if we consider the bitter root that bears it.

First, it proceeds from a selfishness of spirit, whereby we prefer our own content and satisfaction, before the glory of God ; and this becomes not a gracious soul. Our comfort flows in by the performance of the promise, but the revenue of Gods honour is paid in to him, by our humble waiting on him in the interval between the promise and the performance, and is the main end why he forbears the paying it in hastily. *Jacob* served seven years for *Rachel* ; and God sure may better make us wait, before the promise is given in to our embraces by the full accomplishment of it ; *Hebr. 10. 36.* *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the promise.* It is very fit the Master should Dine before the man ; and if we could not like a servant that would think much to stay so long from his meal, as is required at his hands for waiting at his Masters Table ; how much more must God dislike the rudeness of our impatient spirits, that would be set at our meal, and have our turn served in the comfort of the promise, before he hath the honour of our waiting on him !

Secondly, It proceeds from deep ingratitude, and this is a sin odious to God and man ; *Psal. 106. 13.* *They soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel.* God was not behind hand with this people. It

was not so long since he had given them an experiment of his power and truth, he had but newly lent them his hand, and led them dry-shod through a Sea, with which they seemed to be much confirmed in their faith, and enlarged in their acknowledgements, when they came safe to shore ; *vers. 12.* *Then believed they his words, they sang his praises.* One would have thought Gods credit now would have gone for a great sum with them ever after : but it proved nothing so, they dare not trust God with so much as their Bill of fare, what they shall eat and drink ; and therefore it is said, *They waited not for his counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the Wilderness.* That is, they prevented the wildom and providence of God, which would have provided well for them, if they could but have stay'd to see how God would have spread their Table for them. And why all this haste ? *They forgot his works.* They had lost the thankful sense of what was past, and therefore cannot wait for what was to come.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, Hope will enable the soul to wait when the promise stays longest ; it is the very nature of hope so to do. *Lament. 3. 26.* *It is good for a man to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* Hope groans, when the mercy promised comes not, but does not grumble. Hope's groans are from the Spirit sigh'd out to God in prayer, *Rom. 8. 26.* and these lighten the soul of its burden of fear and solicitous care ; whereas the groans of a hopeless soul are vented in discontented passions against God, and these are like a loud wind to a fire, that makes it rage more ; *Jerem. 25. 16.* *They shall drink and be moved, and be mad because of the Sword that I shall send among them.* It is spoken of the enemies of God and his people. God had prepared them a draught, which should have strange effects, *They should be moved.* As a man, whose brain's disturb'd with strong drink, is restless and unquiet, yea, be mad ; as some, when they are drunk, quarrel with every one they meet : So should their hearts be filled with rage even against God himself, who runs his Sword into their sides, because they had no hope to look for any healing of their wounds at his hand. But now where there is hope, the heart is soon quieted and pacified. Hope is the handkerchief that God puts into his peoples hands to wipe the tears from their eyes, which their present troubles, and long stay of expected mercies, draw from them ; *Jer. 31. 16, 17.* *Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy, and there is hope in the end.* This with some other comfortable promises, which God gave his Prophet *Jeremiah* in a Vision, did so over-run and fill his heart with joy, that *ver. 26.* he was as much recruited and comforted, as a sick or weary man is after a night of sweet sleep ; *ver. 26.* *Upon this I wak'd, and my sleep was sweet unto me.*

C H A P. VII.

Sheweth, A threefold assurance which Hope gives the Christian, and thereby quiets him in waiting for the performance of Promises, when God stays long.

HOPE pacifies the Christian with a threefold assurance, when the promise seems to stay long.

1. Hope assures the soul, that though God stays a while before he performs the promise, yet he doth not delay.

2. That when he comes, he will abundantly recompence his longest stay.

3. That while he stays to perform one promise, he will leave the comfort of another promise to bear the Christian company in the absence of that.

S E C T. I.

First, Hope assures the soul, that God will not delay, though he may stay; *Hab. 2. 3. The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* How is this? Though it tarry, it will not tarry! How shall we reconcile this tarrying, and not tarrying? Very well. Though the promise tarrys till the appointed time, yet it will not tarry beyond it. *When the time of the promise drew nigh (it is said) which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, Acts 7. 17.* As the herbs and flowers which sleep all Winter in their roots under ground without any mention of them, when the time of Spring approacheth, presently they start forth of their beds, where they had lain so long unperceiv'd. Thus will the promise in its season do: he delays, who passeth the time appointed: but he only stays, that waits for the appointed time, and then comes. Every promise is dated, but with a mysterious Character; and for want of skill in Gods Chronology, we are prone to think God forgets us, when indeed we forget our selves in being so hold to set God a time of our own, and in being angry that he comes not just then to us. As if a man should set his Watch by his own hungry stomach, rather than by the Sun, and then say 'tis Noon, and chide because his Dinner is not ready. We are over-greedy of comfort, and expect the promise should keep time with our hasty desires, which because it doth not, we are discontented: A high piece of folly! The Sun will not go the faster, for setting our Watch forward; nor the promise come the sooner for our antedating it. It is most true, what one saith, Though God seldom comes at our day, because we seldom reckon right, yet he never fails his own day. That of the *Apostle* is observable, *2 Thess. 2. 2, 3.* He exhorts the *Thessalonian Church* there, That they would not be shaken in mind, or be troubled, as that the day of Christ were at hand. But what need of this exhortation to Saints, that look for their greatest joy to come with the approach of that day? Can their hearts be troubled, to hear the day of their Redemption draws nigh, the day of refreshing is at

hand? It was not therefore, I conceive, the coming of that day, which was so unpleasing and affrighting, but the time in which some Seducers would have persuaded them to expect it, as if it had been at the very doors, and would presently have surprized them in their generation; which had been very sad indeed, because then it should have come before many prophecies and promises had received their accomplishment, and by that means the Truth of God would have gone off the Stage with a slur; which must not, shall not be, as he tells them, *vers. 3. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first; and that man of sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition.* And as that promise stays but till those intermediate truths which have a shorter period, be fulfilled, and then it comes without any possible stay or stop: So do all the rest, but wait till their reckoning be out, and what God hath appointed to intervene be dispatcht, and they punctually shall have their delivery in their set time. Thou art, may be, bleeding under a wounded spirit, a poor broken-hearted creature, that liest sleeping in thy tears for sin. The promise tells thee, that God is nigh to revive thee, thee I say by name, *Isa. 57. 15.* yet thou comest from this prayer, and that Sermon, but hast no sight of him, nor canst hear more news of his coming, than what the promise gives thee. Look now that God suffers no prejudice by his stay in thy thoughts, but conclude that his time is not come, or else he had been ere this with thee; and take heed of measuring Gods miles by thy own Scale, for his nigh may be thy far. God could have told his people the time when he meant to come with the performance of every promise, as easily as set it down in his own purpose, but he hath concealed it in most, as an happy advantage to our faith, whereby we may more fully express our confidence in waiting for that which we know not when we shall receive. *Abrahams* faith was great and strong to follow God when he concealed the place he meant to lead him to, for *he went he knew not whither, Heb. 11. 8.* So it requires great faith to rest satisfied with the promise when the time of payment is hid. But if we consider who we Trade with, we can have no reason to be the least jealous, no not when he stays longest, that he will fail or delay us a moment longer than the set time of the promise. There are three causes men break their times of payment, and come not at their day.

First, Forgetfulness; many remember not what they promise. The day comes, and it is quite out of their minds. Men seldom forget when they are to receive, but too oft when they are to pay debts. An extraordinary occasion must be sent to rub up the *Butlers* memory, or else hee'll never think of his prison-promise. But Gods promise is never out of his thoughts, *He remembers his Covenant, Psal. 105. 8.* his people and their affairs are engraven on the palms of

of his hand, and their Walls are alwayes before him, Isa. 49. 16. Though the preferment of Pharaoh's Court made the Butler forget his promise to Joseph, yet all the glory that Christ sees and enjoys in heaven, hath not the power to blot the remembrance of his promise to his people who lie in chains of affliction here below. And God would have his Saints take notice of this to comfort themselves with, while he comes. *I know the thoughts that I think toward you faith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end,* Jer. 29. 41.

Secondly, Unfaithfulness: A promise with some, is no more than a Collar on an Apes neck, you have them not a whit the faster by it, for they can slip off the obligation at their pleasure. May be they never intended performance, when they passed it, but made use of a promise only as a Key, to lock up their intention of deceiving from your present knowledge. Others haply mean at present as they say, but soon grow sick of their engagement, upon sight of some disadvantage which their after-thoughts discover likely to befall them upon the performance, and therefore their wits are set a-work to coyn some handsome evasion to delude the engagement, or at least delay the payment; which made *Lyfander* say of some men, That they played with Oaths and Promises, *sicut pueri cum astragalis*, as children do at Nine-pins: They will keep them if they can get by the performance; but if it be like to prove a losing Game, they'll rather run in debt to their conscience by breaking them, than to their Purse, or any other worldly interest, by their performance. But no fear of God in this matter; his name is Truth and Faithfulness. Now can Truth it self lie, or Faithfulness deceive? *In my Fathers house (saith Christ) are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you,* Joh. 14. 2, 3. See here the candor and nakedness of our Saviours heart: As if he had said, This is no shift to be gone, that so I may by a fair Tale, leave you in hopes of that which shall never come to pass. No, did I know it otherwise than I speak, my heart is so full of love to you, that it would not have suffered me to have put such a cheat upon you for a thousand Worlds; you may trust me to go; for as surely as you see me go, shall your eyes see me come again to your everlasting joy; the promises are none of them yea and nay, but yea and amen in him.

Secondly, He is Wisdom, as well as Truth. As he is Truth, he cannot wrong or deceive us in breaking his word; and being Wisdom, it is impossible he should promise that which should prejudice himself; and therefore he makes no blots in his purposes or promises, but what he doth in either is immutable. Repentance is indeed an act of wisdom in the Creature; but it presupposeth folly, which is incompatible to God. In a word, men too oft are rash in promising, and therefore what they in haste promise, they perform at leisure; they consider not before they vow, and therefore enquire afterward, Whether they had best stand to it: But the all-wise God needs not this after-game; as in the Creation he look'd back upon the several pieces of that goodly

frame, and saw them so exact, that he took not up his Pencil the second time to mend any thing of the first draught; so in his Promises, they are made with such infinite judgement and wisdom, that what he hath writ, he will stand to for ever, Hosea 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee to me in righteousness and in judgement.* Therefore for ever, because in righteousness and in judgement.

Thirdly, From impotency; Mens promises, alas, depend upon many contingences. The man haply is rich when he seals the Bond, and poor before the day of payment comes about; a wrack at Sea, a fire by Land, or some other sad accident intervenes, that either quite impoverisheth him, or necessitates him to beg further time, with him in the Gospel, *Matth. 18. Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;* but the great God cannot be put into such streights; *The strength of Israel will not lye,* 1 Sam. 15. 29. A; there is a lye of wickedness, when one promiseth what he will not perform; so there is a lye that proceeds from weakness, when a person or thing cannot perform what they promise. Thus indeed all men, yea all creatures will be found lyars to those that lean on them; called therefore *lying vanities*. Vanities, as empty and insufficient; lying vanities, because they promise what they have not to give; but God he is propounded as a sure bottom for our faith to rest on in this respect, *Trust in the Lord, for in Jehovah is strength, strength, or everlasting strength,* Isa. 26. Such strength his is as needs not anothers strength to uphold it. One mans ability to perform his promises, leans on others ability to pay theirs to him; if they fail him, he is forced to fail them. Thus we see, the breaking of one Merchant proves the breaking of many others whose Estates were in his hands. But Gods power is independent. Let the whole Creation break, yet God is the same he was, as able to help as ever; *Though the Fig-tree shall not blossome, neither shall fruit be in the Vines: And, Te will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation, the Lord God is my strength,* Hab. 3. 17, 18. O how happy are the Saints! a people that can never be undone, no not when the whole world turns bankrupt, because they have his Promise, whose Power fails not when that doth. The Christian cannot come to God when he hath not by him what he wants; *How great is thy loving-kindness which thou hast laid up for those that fear thee!* Ps. 31. 'Tis laid up, as a Father hath his Childs Portion in Bags, ready to be paid to him when the time comes. The Saint shall not stay a moment beyond the date of the Promise. *There is forgiveness with thee (saith the Psalmist) it stands ready for thee against thou comest to claim the Promise.*

SECT. II.

Secondly, Hope assures the Christian, that though God staves long, yet he will at last make an abundant recompence for the same, when he comes to perform his Promise. As the wicked get nothing by Gods forbearing to execute his threatening, but the treasuring up more wrath against the day of wrath: So the

the Saints lose nothing by not having the promise presently paid in to them, but rather do, by their forbearing God a while, treasure up more joy against the joyful day, when the promise shall be performed; Rom. 2. 7. *To them who by patient continuance seek for glory and honour, eternal life.* Mark, it is not enough to do well, but to continue therein; nor that neither, except it be patient continuing in well-doing; in the midst of Gods seeming delays; and who ever he be that can do this, shall be rewarded at last for all his patience. Ploughing is hungry work, yet because it is in hope of reaping such an abundant encrease, the Husbandman faints not. O my soul (saith Hope) though thou wantest thy dinner, hold but out a while, and thou shalt have Dinner and Supper served in together when night comes: The sick fits and qualms which the Christian hath in the absence of the promise, are all forgot, and the trouble of them over, when once it comes, and he is feasted with the joy it brings, Prov. 13. 12. *Hope deferred, makes the soul sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a Tree of life:* that is, when it cometh in Gods time after long waiting, then it causeth an overflowing joy. As there is a time, which God hath set for the ripening the fruits of the earth, before which if they be gathered, it is to our loss: So there is a time set by God for the good things of the promise, which we are to wait for, and not unseasonably, pluck them, like green Apples, off the Tree, as too many do, who having no faith or hope to quiet their spirits while Gods time comes, do therefore snatch that by unwarrantable means, which would in time drop ripe into their bosoms: And what get these short-spirited men by their haste? Alas, they find their enjoyments thin and lank like Corn reaped before 'tis fit for the sickle, *wherewith he that bindeth the sheaves, filleth not his bosom.* Therefore we find this duty of waiting preft under this very Metaphor, Jam. 5. 7. *Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* Stay Gods time, till he comes according to his promise, and takes you off your suffering work, and be not hasty to shift your selves out of trouble: And why so? *Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain, be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* The Husbandman (who the Proverb saith, is, *Dives in novum annum*, rich in hope of the next years Crop) though he gladly would have his Corn in the Barn, yet waits for its ripening in the ordinary course of Gods providence; when the former rain comes he is joyful, but yet desires the latter rain also, and stays for it, though long in coming. And do not we see, that a shower sometimes falls close to the time of Harvest, that plumps the ear to the great encrease of the Crop; which some lose, that through distrust of providence put in their Sickle too soon? I am sure mercies come fullest, when most waited for. Christ did not so soon supply them with Wine at the Marriage of Cana, as his Mother desired, but they had the more for staying a while. There is a double fulness, which the Christian may hope to find in those enjoyments that he hath with long patience waited for, above another that cannot stay Gods leisure.

First, A fulness of duration. Enjoyments snatch out of Gods hand, and not given by it, are but Guests come not to stay long; like David's child born in adultery, they commonly dye in the Cradle: They are like some fruit gather'd green, which soon rots. Is it riches that is thus got? Some are said to *make haste to be rich*, Prov. 28. 20: They cannot by a conscionable diligence in their particular calling, and exercise of Godliness in their general, wait upon God; no, the promise doth not gallop fast enough for them: on therefore they spurr, and by fordid practises make haste to be rich. But God makes as much haste to melt their estate, as they do to gather. No Salt will keep that Meat long from corrupting, which was over-heated in the driving: nor any care and providence of man keep that estate from Gods curse, which is got by so hot and sinful a pursuit; Prov. 13. 11. *Wealth gotten by vanity (that is, vain, unwarrantable courses) it shall be diminished.* Like the unsound fat, which great Drinkers, and greedy Eaters gain to themselves, it hath that in it, that will hasten its ruine, Prov. 21. 6. *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death:* The meaning is, such Estates are tossed like a Ball, from one to another, and are not like to stay long in any hand, till it comes into the Godly mans, whom God oft, by his providence, makes Heir to such mens riches, as you may see, Job 22. 17. *Eccles. 2. 26.* Again, Is it comfort and inward joy? Some make too much haste for this: They are not like other Christians, who use to have a wet seed-time, and are content to wait for joy till Harvest, or at least, till it be in some forwardness; and the seed of grace which was sown in tears of humiliation, appears above ground in such solid evidences, as do in some degree satisfie them concerning the reality and truth of the same. Then indeed the sincere Christians spirit begins to cheer up, and his comfort holds, yea, encreateth more and more, as the Sun that after a contest with some thick mist, breaks forth, and gets a full victory of those vapours which for a while darkned it, Prov. 13. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoyleth;* that is, over all his fears and doubts. But there are others so hasty, that they are catching at comfort, before ever they were led into acquaintance with godly sorrow. They are delivered without pain, and their faith flames forth into the joy of assurance, before any smoak of doubtings and fears were seen to arise in their hearts: but alas, it is as soon lost as got, like too forward a snibing Spring, that makes the Husbandman weep at Harvest: Or a fair Sun-shine day in Winter, that is the breeder of many foul ones after it. The stony ground is a clear instance for this, Mark 4. whose joy was as quickly down as up. A storm of Persecution or temptation comes, and immediately he is offended. In a word, take but one instance more, and that is in point of deliverance. Such hasty spirits that cannot wait for the promise to open their prison door, and God to give them a release in his time, but break prison, and by some unwarrantable practice winde themselves out of trouble, do we not see how miserably they befooled themselves? For while they think, by the midwifery of their sinful policy, to hasten their deliverance, they

kill it in the birth, which had it come in Gods time, might have staid many a fair day with them. The *Jews* are a sad instance for this, who though God gave them such full security for their deliverance from the *Babylonian* hand, would yet take their own course, hoping, it seems, to compass it sooner by policy, than they could expect it to be effected by providence, and therefore to *Egypt* they will post in all haste, not doubting but they shall thence bring their deliverance; but alas, it proved far otherwise; for all they got, was to have more links added to their Chain of Bondage, and their Lordly Masters to use greater rigour upon them; which God by his Prophet, bids them thank their own hasty, unbelieving spirits for, *Iſa.* 30. 15. *Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy one of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not.* Indeed if we look on such as have quietly waited by Hope for Gods coming to their help, we shall find they ever sped well. *Jeshuah*, who bore up against all discouragements from God and Man, stedfastly believing, and patiently waiting for the Land God had promised, did he not live to walk over their graves in the Wilderness, that would have turn'd back to *Egypt*? and to be witnesses to their destruction also, who presumptuously went up the Hill to fight the Enemy, and take the Land (as they vainly hoped) before Gods time was come, *Deut.* 1. Yea, did not he at last divide the Land, and lay his bones in a bed of honour, after he had lived to see the promise of God happily perform'd to his people? So *David*, whose hope and patience was admirable in waiting for the Kingdom, after he had the promise of it; especially if we consider what fair opportunities he had to take cruel *Saul* out of the way, whose life alone did stand betwixt him and the Throne; neither did he want matter to fill up a declaration for the satisfaction and pacifying the minds of the people, if he had a mind to have gone this way to the Crown; but he knew those plausible Arguments for such a Fact, which would have pleased the multitude, would not have pacified his own conscience, and this staid his hand from any such ripping open the womb of the promise, to come by the Crown, with which it was big, but left it to go its full time, and he lost nothing by it.

Secondly, There flows in a fulness of benediction with an enjoyment reaped in Gods full time, which is lost for want of patience to wait thereunto. Now this benediction is paid in to the waiting souls both these two ways. First, He hath that enjoyment sweetned to him with Gods love and favour for his comfort. Secondly, He hath it sanctified to him in the happy fruit it bears, for his good.

First, He hath it sweetned to him with the love and favour of God for his comfort, which he cannot so well expect that carves for himself; and cannot stay for God in his own time to lay it on his Trencher. There is guilt ever to be found in the company of impatience and distrust; and where guilt is contracted in the getting of an enjoyment, there can be little sweetness tasted when it comes to be used. Oh, guilt is an imbittering thing, it keeps the soul in a continual fear of hearing ill news from hea-

ven; and a soul in fear, is not in case to relish the sweetness of a mercy. Such a one may haply have a little tumultuous joy, and warm himself a while at this rash fire of his own kindling, till he comes to have some serious discourse with his own heart in cold blood, about the way and manner of getting the enjoyment, and this is sure to send such a dampness to the heart of the poor creature, as will not suffer that fire long to burn clear. O what a stab is it to the heart of an Oppressor, to say of his great Wealth, as that King of his Crown, *Here is a fair Estate, but God knows how I came by it!* What a wound to the joy of a hypocrite! I have pretended to a great deal of comfort, but God knows how I came by it! Whereas the Christian, who receives any comfort, inward or outward from Gods hand, as a return of his patient waiting, he hath none of these sad thoughts to scare him and break his draught when the Cup is at his mouth. He knows where he had his outward estate, and inward comfort; he can bring God to vouch them both, that they are with his leave and liking. There is a great odds between the joy of the Husbandman, at the happy in-ning of his Corn in Harvest, and the Thieves joy, who hath stoln some sheaves out of anothers field, and is making merry with his Booty as soon as he is got home: Possibly, you may hear a greater noise and outis of joy in the Thiefs House, than the Honest Husbandmans, yet no compare between them. One knock at the Thiefs Door by an Officer that comes to search his House for stoln goods, spoils the mirth of the whole House, who run one this way, and another that: O what fear and shame must then take hold on his guilty heart, that hears God coming to search for his stoln mercies and comforts.

Secondly, The waiting soul hath enjoyments sanctified to him for his good, and this another wants with all he hath. And what is the blessing of mercy, but to have it to do us good? Hasty spirits grow worse by enjoyments gather'd out of season. This is a fore evil indeed, to have Wealth for our hurt and comfort for our hurt. It was the sin of *Israel*, they waited not for his counsel, *Pſal.* 106. 13. God had taken them for his charge, and undertook to provide for them if they would have stood to his allowance; but they could not stay his leisure, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert, *vers.* 14. They must have what pleaseth their Palate, and when their own impatient hearts call, or not at all; and so they had, *He gave them their request,* *vers.* 15. but they had better have been without their Feast, for they did not thrive by it, *He sent leanness into their souls,* *vers.* 15. a secret curse came with their enjoyments, which soon appeared in those great sins they thereupon were left to commit, *vers.* 16. *They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord;* as also the heavy judgements by which God did testify against them for the same, *Numb.* 11. 31. whereas mercies that are received in Gods way and time, prove meat of better juice and purer nourishment to the waiting soul; they do not break out into such botches and plague-sores as these; as the other are fuel for lust,

so these food to the Saints graces, and make them more humble and holy: See this in *Iſa.* 30. 18, 19. compared with *ver.* 22. where they, as a fruit of their patient waiting on God for their outward deliverance, have with it, that which is more worth than the deliverance it self, *i. e.* grace to improve and use it holily. It was a great mercy that *Hannah* had, after her many prayers and long waiting, a son; but a greater, that she had a heart to give up her son again to God, that gave him to her. To have estate, health, or any other enjoyment upon waiting on God for the same, is mercy, but not to be compared with that blessing which seasons and sanctifies the heart to use them for Gods glory. And this is the ordinary portion of the waiting soul, and that not only in outward comforts, but inward also: The joy and inward peace which the sincere soul hath thus, makes it more humble, Holy, Heavenly; whereas the comfort which the Hypocrite comes so quickly by, either degenerates into pride and self-conceit, or empties it self into some other filthy sink, sometimes even of open profaneness it self, before it hath run far.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Hope assures the soul, that while God staves the performance of one promise, he shall have the absence thereof supplied with the presence of another. And this is enough to quiet the heart of any that understands himself. God hath laid things in such a sweet method, that there is not one point of time, wherein the soul of a believer is left wholly destitute of comfort, but there is one promise or other that stands ready to minister unto his present wants. Sometimes haply he may want what he strongly desires, yet even then care is taken for his present subsistence; one promise bears the Christian company while another comes. And what cause hath the sick man to complain, though all his friends do not sit up with him together, if they take it by turns, and never leave him without a sufficient number to look to him? We read of a *Tree of Life*, *Rev.* 22. 2. which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month: so that it is never without some hanging on it which is fit for the Eater. What can this Tree be better conceived to be than Christ, who yields all manner of fruit in his promises, and comfort for all times, all conditions. The believer can never come, but he shall find some promise ripe to be eaten, with which he may well stay his stomach, till the other (whose time to be gather'd, is not yet come) hangs for further ripening. Here you see the Christian hath provision for all the year long. When

Christ return'd to Heaven, he gave his Disciples this to comfort them, *that he would come again, and carry them with him unto his Fathers House*, where now he lives himself in glory, *John* 14. 2. This is sweet indeed; but alas, what shall they do in the mean time to weather out those many storms, which were to intervene between this promise, and the time when it shall be performed! This also our Saviour considered, and tells them, he does not mean to leave them comfortless, but gives them another promise to keep house with in the mean time, *i. e.* a promise of his Spirit, who should be with them on Earth, *John* 14. 16. while he took them to be with him in heaven. The Christian is never at such a loss, wherein hope cannot relieve it. *Jer.* 17. 7, 8. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a Tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the River, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* These waters are the promises, from which the believer draws continual matter of comfort, that as a tree planted by the River, flourisheth, however the year goes, so doth he, whatever the temper of Gods exterior providence is. Possibly the Christian is in an afflicted state, and the promise for deliverance comes not, yet then hope can entertain him in the absence of that, at the cost of another promise; that though God doth not at present deliver out of the affliction, yet he will support him under it, *1 Cor.* 10. 13. if yet the Christian cannot find this promise paid in to such a height, as to discharge him of all impatience, distrust, and other sinful distempers (which to his grief he finds too busie in him for all the promise) then Hope hath another Window to let out the smother at; and that is by presenting the soul with those promises which assure the weak Christian, that pardoning mercy shall cover those defects, which assisting grace did not fully conquer; *Mal.* 3. 17. *I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.* So *Micah* 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? And certainly God would not have suffered so much impatience to have broke out in Job, but that he would have something left for pardoning mercy to do at the close of all, to which that holy man should see himself beholden, both for his deliverance, and that honourable testimony also which God himself gave of him before his uncharitable Friends, who from his great afflictions, and some discomposure of spirit in them, did so unmercifully burthen him with the heavy charge of being an Hypocrite.*

CHAP. VIII.

Contains a tryal of what metal our Helmet of Hope is made?

Uſe 1. **F**OR Tryal, Whether we have this Helmet of Hope on our heads or no; This Helmet, I say, commended to us in the Text. As for such paltry Ware, that most are contented with for cheap-

ness sake, it alas deserves not the name of a true hope, no more than a Paper-Cap doth of a Helmet. Look to the metal and temper of your Helmet in an especial manner; for at this most blows are made.

He that seeks chiefly to defend his own head (the *Serpent* I mean) will aim most to wound yours. None but fools and children are so credulous, as to be blown up with great hopes, upon any light occasion, and slight ground. They who are wise, and have their wits about them, will be as wary how they place their hopes, especially for Salvation, as a prudent Pilot, that hath a rich lading, would be where he moors his Ship, and casts his Anchor. There is reason for our utmost care herein, because nothing exposeth men to more shame, than to meet with disappointment in their hopes; Job 6. 20. *They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed; i. e. to miss of what they hoped to have found in those Brooks.* But no shame like to that which a false hope for eternal Salvation, will put sinners to at last; *Some shall rise to shame everlasting, Dan. 12.* They shall awake out of their graves, and out of that Fools Paradise also, wherein their vain hopes had entertain'd them all their lives; and see instead of a Heaven they expected, Hell to be in expectation of them, and gaping with full mouth for them. If the servants of *Eglon* were so ashamed after their waiting a while at their Princes door (from whom they expected all their preferment) to find him and their hopes with him dead on the floor, *Judg. 3. 25.* O whose heart then can think what a mixture of shame and horror shall meet in their faces and hearts at the great day, who shall see all their hopes for Heaven hop headless, and leave them in the hands of tormenting Devils to all eternity! *Hannibal's* Souldiers did not so confidently divide the Goldsmiths Shops in *Rome* among themselves (which yet they never took) as many presumptuous sinners do promise themselves Heavens bliss and happiness, who must instead thereof sit down with shame in Hell, except they can, before they dye, shew better ground for their hope, than now they are able to do. O what will these fond Dreamers do in the day of the Lords anger, when they shall see the whole world in a light flame round about them, and hear God (whose piercing eyes will look them through and through) calling them forth before men and Angels, to the Scrutiny! Will they then stand to their hope, and vouch it to the face of Christ, which now they bless themselves so in! surely their hearts will fail them for such an enterprize. None then will speak so ill of them, as their own consciences shall do; God will in that day use their own tongues to accuse them, and set forth the folly of their ridiculous hope to the confusion of their faces before all the world. The Prophet foretells a time, when the false Prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive, but he shall say, *I am no Prophet, I am an Husbandman, &c. Zech. 13. 4, 5.* Truly, the most notorious false Prophet that the world hath, and deceiveth most, is this vain hope, which men take up for their Salvation. This Prophecies of Peace, Pardon, and Heaven, to be the portion of such, as never once entred into Gods heart to make heirs thereof, but the day is coming, and it hasteneth, wherein this false Prophet shall be confounded; then the Hypocrite shall confess he never had any hope for Salvation, but what was the Idol of his own fancies

making; and the Formalist shall throw off the garment of his profession by which he deceived himself and others, and appear to himself and all the world in his naked colours. It behoves therefore every one to be strict and curious in the search of his own heart, to find what his hope is built upon.

Now Hope of the right make is a rational well grounded hope; 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* Alas, how can they give an answer to others, that have not any to give to their own consciences to this question, Why dost thou hope to be saved O my soul? There is no Christian be he never so weak in grace, but hath some reason bottom'd on the Scripture (for other I mean not) for the hope he professeth. Do you think, yea, can you be so absurd as to think your own bold presumption without any word of Promise to build upon, can entitle your souls to the inheritance in Gods Kingdom? Should one come and say your house and land were his, and shew no writing under your hand by which you did ever grant him a right thereunto, but all he can say, is, he dreamt the last night that your house and land was his, and therefore now he demands it, would you not think the man mad, and had more right to the Bedlam than to your estate? And yet there are many hope to be saved, that can give no better reason than this comes to for the same, and such are all grossly ignorant and prophane sinners. As it is enough for a Saint to end the trouble which his fears put him into, to ask his soul why he is disquieted within him, would he but observe how little reason his heart can give for the same; so to dismount the bold sinner from his prancing hopes, if he might be prevailed with to call himself to an account, and thus to accost his soul sometimes, and resolve not to stir without a satisfactory answer; In sober sadness tell me O my soul, what reason find'st thou in the whole Bible, for thee to hope for salvation, who livest in ignorance of God, or a trade of sin against God? certainly he should find his soul as mute and speechless as the man without the wedding garment was at Christs question. This is the reason why men are such strangers to themselves, and dare not enter into any discourse upon this subject with their own hearts, because they know they should soon make an uproar in their Consciences, that would not be stilled in haste; they cocker their false hearts as much as *David* did his *Adonijah*, who in all his life never displeased him so much as to ask him, *Why dost thou so?* Nor they their souls to the day of their death by asking them, Soul, why hopest thou so? Or if they have, it hath been as *Pilate*, who asked Christ, *what was Truth*, John 18. but had no mind to stay for an answer. May be thou art an ignorant soul, who knowest neither who Christ is, nor what in Christ, hope is to fasten its hold upon; but only with a blind surmise thou hopest, God will be better to thee than to damn thee at last; but why thou thus hopest, thou canst give no reason, nor I neither. If he will save thee as now thou art, he must make a new Gospel for thy sake; for in this Bible it damns thee without hope or help; *The Gospel is hid to them that perish*, 2 Cor. 4. But if knowledge will do it, thou haply

haply canst shew good store of that; this is the breack-work under which thou liest, and keepest off those shot which are made at thee from the word, for those lusts thou livest and lvest in as a beast in his dung, defiling thy self with them daily. And is this all thou hast to prove thy hopes for salvation true and solid? Indeed many make no better use of their knowledge of the Scripture, than thieves do of the knowledge they have of the Law of the Land, who study it not that they mean to keep it, but to make them more cunning to evade the charge of it, when called in question by it: So many acquaint themselves with the Word, especially those passages in it that display the mercy of God to sinners at the greatest breadth, that with these, they may stuff a pillow to lay their wretched heads on, when the cry of their abominations, in which they live, begins to break their rest. God deliver you (my dear friends) from such a hope as this. Surely you mean to provide a better Answer to give unto Christ at the great day than this, why ye hope to be saved by him; do you not? Will thy knowledge, thinkest thou, be as strong a plea for Salvation, as thy sins which thou wallowest in against that knowledge, will be for thy damnation? If there be hope for such as thee, then come Judas and Jezabel, yea Devils, and all ye infernal spirits, and strike in with this good company for a part with them, for some of you can plead more of this than any of them all.

But may be thou hast more yet to say for thy self than this comes to. Thou art not only a knowing person, but a reformed also; the pollutions in which once thou layest, now thou hast escaped, yea, thy Reformation is embellish'd and set forth with a very gaudy profession of Religion, both which have gained thee a very high opinion in the thoughts of all thy Neighbours, so that if Heaven might be carried by hands, thou couldst haply have a Testimonial for thy unblameable and Saint-like behaviour among them; yet let me tell thee, if thou meanest to be faithful to thy own soul, thou must not rest in their charitable opinion of thee, nor judge of thy hopes for Heaven, by what comes under their cogni-

zance, to wit, the behaviour of thy outward man (for further their eye and observation reacheth not) but art to look inward into thy own bosome, and enquire, what spring thou canst find there to have been the cause of this change and new motion that hath appeared in thy external conversation: This and this alone must decide the controversie, and bring thy thoughts to an issue, what to judge of thy Hope, whether spurious or legitimate. It is not a new face that colours our outward behaviour, but a new principle that changeth the frame of the heart within, will evince thy hope to be good and genuine, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope.* The new birth entitles to the new hope; if the soul be dead, the hope cannot be alive. And the soul may be dead, and yet put into a very handsome drefs of external reformation and profession, as well as a dead body may be clad with rich cloaths. A beggars son got into the cloaths of a rich mans child, may as well hope to be Heir to the rich mans land, as thou, by an external reformation and profession, to be Gods Heir in glory. The childs hopes are from his own father, not from a stranger; now while thou art in a natural estate (though never so finisied) Old Adam is thy father; and what canst thou hope from him, who proved worse than naught, and left his poor posterity nothing, except we should put a crazy mortal body, a sinful nature, and a fearful expectation of death temporal and eternal from the wrathful hand of a provoked God (which indeed he left all his children) into his inventory! O Sirs, how can you give way that any sleep should fall upon your eyes, till you get into this relation to God! *Hannah* was a woman of a bitter spirit, till she got a child from God; and hast not thou more reason to be so, till thou canst get to be a child of God? Better a thousand times over that thou shouldst die childless, than Fatherless; my meaning is, that thou shouldst leave no child to inherit thy estate on earth, than to have no Father to give thee an inheritance in Heaven when thou art taken hence.

CHAP. IX.

Two Duties press'd upon those who upon tryal find this grace of Hope in them.

Use 2. **F**OR Exhortation; and this either respects Believers who are furnisht with this Helmet; or Unbelievers who yet are without Hope.

First, For you (Believers) who, upon tryal, are found to have this Helmet of Hope, several duties are to be press'd upon you as such.

SECT. I.

First, Be thankful for this unspeakable gift. I will not believe thou hast it, if thy heart be not abundantly let out in thankfulness for it. Blessed Paul cannot speak of this, but in a Doxology, 1 Pet.

1. 3. *Blessed be God, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* The usual Proem to his Epistles, is of this strain, Col. 1. 5. *Ephes. 1. 3.* Hast thou Heaven in hope? 'Tis more than if thou hadst the whole World in hand. The greatest Monarch the earth hath, will be glad, in a dying hour, to change his Crown for thy Helmet; his Crown will not procure him this Helmet, but thy Helmet will bring thee to a Crown, when he shall have none to wear; a Crown, not of gold, but of glory, which once on, shall never be taken off, as his is sure to be. O remember, Christian, what but a while since thou wert; so far from having any hope of Heaven, that thou

Hope

thou wert under a fearful expectation of Hell and Damnation: And are those Chains of guilt, with which thy trembling conscience was weighed down unto despair, taken off, and thy head lift up to look for such high preferment in the celestial Court of that God, whose wrath thou hadst, by thy horrid treasons, most justly incensed against thee? Certainly, of all the men in the world, thou art deepest in debt to the mercy of God: If he will be thanked for a Crust; he looks, sure, thou shouldst give him more for a Crown. If food and rayment, though coarse and mean, (suppose but roots and rags) be gratefully to be acknowledg'd: O with what ravishment of love and thankfulness, are you to think and speak of those rarities and Robes with which you hope to be fed and clad in his heavenly Kingdom! especially if you cast your eye aside, and behold those that were once your fellow-prisoners, in what a sad and dismal condition they continue, while all this happiness is befalling you! It could not sure but affect his heart into admiration of his Princes mercy, and undeserved favour to him, who is saved from the Gibbet only by his gracious pardon; if as he is riding in a Coach towards his Princes Court (there to live in Wealth and Honour) he should meet some of his fellow-Traytors on Sleds, as they are dragging full of shame and horror to execution, for the same Treason in which he had as deep a hand as any of them all. And dost not thou see (Christian) many of thy poor Neighbours, with whom haply thou hast had a partnership in sin, pinion'd with impenitency and unbelief, driving apace to Hell and destruction, while thou, by the free distinguishing mercy of God, art on thy way for Heaven and Glory! O down on thy knees, and cry out, *Lord, why wilt thou shew thy self to me, and not to these!* How easie had it been, and righteous for God, to have directed the pardon to them, and the warrant for Damnation unto thee! When thou hast spent thy own breath and spirits in praising God, thou hadst need beg a collection of praises of all thy Friends, that have a heart to contribute to such a charitable work, that they would help thee in paying this debt; and yet all this, with what in heaven thou shalt disburse thy self to all eternity, in better coyn than can be expected from thee here (where thy soul is embased with sinful mixtures) it must be accounted rather an acknowledgement of what thou owest to thy God, than any payment of the least part of the debt.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Live up to thy *Hopes* Christian; Let there be a *decorum* kept between thy principles and thy practises; thy hope of Heaven, and walk on Earth. The eye should direct the foot. Thou lookest for Salvation; walk the same way thy eye looks. This is so often press'd in the Word, as shews both its necessity and difficulty. Sometimes we are stirred up to act *as becometh Saints*, Rom. 16. 2. Eph. 5. 3. Sometimes, *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, Phil. 1. 27. Sometimes, *as becometh those who profess godliness*, 1 Tim. 2. 10. There is a *decorum*, a *decorum*, and comely behaviour, which if

a Christian doth not observe in his walking, he betrays his high Calling and hopes, unto scorn and contempt. To look high, and to live low, O how ridiculous appears it to all men! When a man is dress'd on purpose to be laugh'd at and made a jeering stock, they put on him something of the King, and something of the Beggar, that by this patchery of mock-majesty, with sordid baseness together, he may appear the greater fool to all the company. And certainly, if the Devil might have the dressing of a man, so as to cast the greatest shame and ignominy upon him, yea, upon Christ and the profession of his Gospel, he could not think of a readier way than to persuade a wretch to pretend to high and glorious hopes of Heaven, and then to have nothing suitable to the high-flown hopes in his conversation, but all base and unworthy of such royal claims. If ye should see one going into the field with a Helmet of Brass on his Head, but a wooden sword in one hand, and a paper-shield on the other, and the rest of his Armour like to these, you would expect he was not likely to hurt his enemies, except they should break their sides with laughing at him. Such a goodly spectacle is the brag-Professor who lifts up his head on high with a bold expectation of salvation, but can shew never a grace beside, to suit with the great hope he hath taken up; he may make the Devil sport, but never do him any great hurt, or himself good.

Quest. But, may be you will ask, How is the Christian to live up to his *Hopes*?

Ans. I answer, First in general, he is to be careful to do nothing in which he may not freely act his hope, and from the promise expect that God will for Christs sake, both approve the action, and reward his person for it. Ask thy soul this question seriously, before thou engagest in any work: May I hope, that God will bid me good speed? Can I look for his countenance in it, and his blessing on it? It is very unworthy of a Christian to do any thing sneakingly, as if he were afraid God or his conscience should be privy to his work; *Whatsoever is not of hope, is sin, because it cannot be of faith*: O how would this hedge in the Christians heart from all by-paths! Possibly thou hast a grudge against thy neighbour: the fire is kindled in thy heart, though it flames not presently out into bitter words, and angry behaviour, and thou art going to pray; ask now thy soul, whether God will accept that Sacrifice which is kindled with such strange fire? yea, bid thy soul bethink her self how thy hopes of pardoning and saving mercy from God can agree with thy wrathful un-forgiving spirit towards thy brother? certainly as the Sun cannot well be seen through a disturb'd air, so neither can the eye of hope well see her object (heavens salvation) when the soul is tumultuous and royled with anger and unchristian passion.

But Secondly to instance in some particulars, wherein you must comport with your hopes of Salvation.

CHAP. X.

Several instances wherein the Christian should comport with, and live up to his Hopes.

SECT. I.

First, **I**N your Company. Man is a sociable creature, made for fellowship. And what Company is fit for thee to consort with, but those of the same breeding and hopes with thy self? The Saints are a distinct society from the world. *Let ours learn to maintain good works,* Titus 3. 14. Ours, i. e. of our fellowship. And it becomes them to seek their company among themselves. That of Peter and John is observable, *Acts* 4. 23. *Being let go, they went to their own company.* When among the ungodly world, they made account they were not in their own company, and therefore stay'd no longer than needs must among them. There were enough surely in the Land of Canaan with whom Abraham might have associated; but he knew they were not company for him to be linked to in any intimacy of acquaintance; and therefore it is said of him, *Heb.* 11. 9. *that he sojourned in the Land of Promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the same promise.* We find him indeed confederate with Mamre the Amorite, and Eshcol, and Aner, his brethren, *Gen.* 14. 13. which presupposeth more than ordinary acquaintance. But these in all probability, were Profelytes, and had, by Abraham's godly persuasions, renounced their Idolatry, to worship, with him, the true God: and we may the rather be induced to think so, because we find them so deeply engaged with Abraham in battel against those Idolatrous Neighbour Princes, which (had they themselves been Idolaters) 'tis like they would not have done for a stranger, and him of a strange Religion also. We find how dearly some of the Saints have paid for their acquaintance with the wicked, as *Jehosophat* for his intimacy with *Ahab*, and many others; and if knowing this, we shall yet associate our selves with such, we cannot in reason look to pay less than any they have done; yea, well if we come off so cheap, because we have their follies recorded to make us wiser. O consider, Christian, whither thou art going in thy hopes; is it not to Heaven? and do not men seek for such company as go their way? And are the wicked of thy way! When Heavens way and Hells meet in one road, then, and not till then, can that be. And if thy companion will not walk in Heaven-way, what wilt thou do that walkest with him! It is to be feared, thou must comply too much with him in his way. In a word, Christian, Thy hope points to Heaven; and is it not one thing thou hopest for, when thou comest there, to be delivered from all company with the wicked? and what thou then hopest for, dost thou not now pray for? sure enough thou dost, if a true Saint. Whatever is the object of a Saints hope, is the subject of his prayer. As oft as thou saist, *Thy Kingdom come*, thou prayest thus much: And will

hoping and praying to be delivered from them, stand with throwing thy self upon them, and intimate familiarity with them?

SECT. II.

Secondly, Then thou compest with thy hopes of Salvation, when thou labourest to be as holy in thy conversation, as thou art high in thy expectation. This the *Apostle* urgeth from the condescency of the thing, *2 Pet.* 3. 11. *What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God?* Certainly, it becomes such to be holy even to admiration, who look for such a blessed day! We hope then to be like the Angels in glory, and therefore should, if possible, live now like Angels in holiness. Every believing soul is Christs Spouse. The day of conversion, is the day of espousals, wherein she is contracted and betrothed by faith to Christ: And as such, lives in hope for the Marriage-day, when he shall come and fetch her home unto his fathers house (as *Isaac* did *Rebecca* into his Mothers Tent) there to co-habite with him, and live in his sweet embraces of love, world without end. Now, would the Bride have her Bridegroom find her (when he comes) in her sluttish and vile raiment? No sure; *Can a Bride forget her attire?* *Jer.* 2. 32. Was it ever known, that a Bride forgot to have her Wedding-cloaths made against the Marriage-day? or to put them on, when she looks for her Bridegrooms coming? Holiness is the raiment of needle-work, in which (Christian) thou art to be brought unto thy King and Husband, *Psal.* 45. 14. Wherefore is the Wedding-day put off so long, but because this garment is so long a making? When this is once wrought, and thou ready dressed, then that joyful day comes; *The Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her self ready*, *Rev.* 19. 8. Thou hast not, Christian, a weightier Argument to knock down all temptations to sin, nor a more honourable way to get the victory of them, than by setting thy hope to grapple with them. I confess, 'tis well when this Enemy is worsted, what hand soever he falls by; though it be the fear of Hell that clubs it down in the lives of men, it is better than not at all; yet I must tell you, that as the *Israelites* state was poor and servile, when they were fain to borrow the *Philistines* grind-stone to sharpen every man his Axe and Mattock, *1 Sam.* 13. 22. so it speaks the Christian to be in no very good state as to his spiritual affairs, when he is fain to use the wicked mans Argument to keep him from sinning, and nothing will set an edge upon his spirit to cut through temptation, but what the uncircumcised World themselves use. Thou, Christian, art of a nobler spirit, and more refined temper than these, I trow.

And

And as we have a finer stone to sharpen a Razor with, than we use for a Butchers Knife; so certainly, a more spiritual and ingenuous Argument would become thee better to make thee keen and sharp against sin, than what prevails with the worst of men sometimes to forbear at least acting their wickedness. Go thou Christian to thy *Hope*, and while the slavish sinner scares and terrifies himself from his lust with fire and brimstone, do thou shame thy self out of all acquaintance with it from the great and glorious things thou lookest for in Heaven. Is it a sin of sensual pleasure that assaults thy Castle? Say then to thy soul, Shall I play the beast on earth, that hope to be such a glorious creature in Heaven! Shall that head be found now in a *Dalilah's* lap, that ere long I hope will be laid in *Abraham's* bosome! Can I now yield to defile that body with lust and vomit, which is the garment my soul hopes to wear in Heaven! O no! avant Satan, I'll have nothing to do with thee, or any thing that will make me unmeet for that Blessed place and Holy state I wait for.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Let thy hope of Heaven moderate thy affections to Earth. *Be sober, and hope*, saith the Apostle, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* You that look for so much in another world, may very well be content with a little in this. Nothing more unbecomes a Heavenly hope, than an Earthly heart. You would think it an unseemly thing, to see some rich man, that hath a vast estate, among the poor Gleaners in Harvest time, as busie to pick up the ears of Corn that are left in the field, as the most miserable beggar in the company. O how all the world would cry shame of such a fordid-spirited man! Well Christian, be not angry, if I tell thee that thou dost a more shameful thing thy self by far, if thou that pretendest to hope for Heaven, beest as eager in the pursuit of this worlds trash, as the poor carnal wretch is who expects no portion, but what God hath left him to pick up in the field of this World. Certainly, thy hope is either false, or at best very little. The higher that the Summer-Sun mounts above the Horizon, the more force it bears both to clear and also heat the air with his beams: And if thy hope of Salvation were advanced to any ordinary pitch and height in thy soul, it would scatter these inordinate desires after this World with which now thou art choaked up, and put thee into a greater heat of affection after Heaven, than now thou feelest to things below. I remember, *Augustine* relating what sweet discourse passed once between his Mother and himself concerning the joys of Heaven, breaks forth into this Apostrophe, *Lord thou knowest, Quam viluit nobis in illo die hic mundus; How vile and contemptible this sorry world was in our eye in that day, when our hearts were warmed with some sweet discourse of that blessed place.* And I doubt not, but every gracious person finds the same by himself; the nearer to heaven he gets in his hopes, the further he goes from earth in his desires: When he stands upon these battlements of Heaven, he can look down upon this Dunghil World as a *Nigrum nihil*, a little dust-heap, next to

nothing. It is *Sculptors* his observation, that though there are many blemishes by which the eminent Saints and Servants of God, recorded in Scripture, are set forth as instances of Humane frailty; yet not one godly man in all the Scripture is to be found, whose story is blotted with the charge of Covetousness. If that hold true, which as yet I am not able to disprove, we may wonder how it comes about, that it should, now a dayes, be called the *Professors sin*, and become a common charge laid by the prophane upon those that pretend to Heaven more than themselves. O wo to those wretched men, who, by their scandalous practises in this kind, put the Coal into wicked mens hands, with which they now black the names of all the godly, as if to be covetous, were a necessary consequent of Profession.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Let thy hope of Heaven master thy fear of Death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to dye, who hopest to live by dying! Is the Apprentice afraid of the Day when his Time comes out? He that runs a race, or coming too soon to his goal? The Pilot troubled when he sees his harbour? Or the betrothed Virgin grieved when the Wedding-day approacheth? Death is all this to thee; when that comes, thy Indenture expires, and thy *Jubilee* is come. Thy race is run, and the Crown won, sure to drop on thy head when thy soul goes out of thy body. Thy voyage, how troublesome soever it was in the Sailing, is now happily finish'd, and Death doth but this friendly office for thee, to uncover and open the *Ark* of thy body, that it may safely land thy soul on the shoar of eternity at thy heavenly Fathers door, yea, in his sweet embraces, never to be put to sea more. In a word, Thy Husband is come for thee, and knocks with Deaths hand at thy Door, to come forth unto him, that he may perform his promise which in the day of thy betrothing he made to thee; and thou lovest him but little, if thou beest not willing to be at the trouble of a remove hence, for to enjoy his blisful presence, in his Fathers Royal Palace of Heaven, where such preparation is made for thy entertainment, that thou canst not know here, though an Angel were sent on purpose to inform thee. O what tongue can expresse that felicity, which infinite mercy bespeaks, infinite wisdom deviseth, infinite merit purchaseth, and infinite power makes ready. I have read that the *Turks* say, *They do not think we Christians believe Heaven to be such a glorious place as we profess and talk of; for if we did, we would not be so afraid to go thither, as they see many that profess themselves Christians, to be.* It cannot be denied, but all inordinate fears of death, betray great unbelief, and little hope. We do not look upon death under a right notion, and so we start at it, which were we by faith but able to see through, and assure our selves it comes to do us a good turn; we should feed as comfortably on the thoughts of it, as now we are scared at the apparition of it. The Horse eats that Hay in the Rack, which he is afraid of when a little lyes at a distance on the Road; because there he knows it, but on the way he doth not.

Christian,

Christian, understand aright what message Death brings to thee, and the fear of it will be over; it snatcheth thee indeed from this Worlds enjoyments, but it leads thee to the felicities of another incomparably better. And who, at a Feast, will chide the Servant that takes away the first course, of which enough is eaten, to make room for the second to be set on, that consists of far greater delicacies?

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Then thou comportest with thy hope, when thou livest in the joy of thy hope. A sad uncheerful heart does not become a lively hope. Let him follow his Master with a heavy countenance, that looks to get nothing by his service; thou art out of this fear, and therefore wrongest both thy self and thy God too by thy disconsolate spirit, *Heb.*

3. 6. Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end. Christ takes no more delight to dwell in a sad uncheerful heart, than we in a dark melancholy house. Open thy shutters therefore, and let in the light which sheds its beams upon thee from the Promise, or else thy sweet Saviour will be gone. We do not use to entertain our Friends in a dark room, or sit by those that visit us morose and melancholik; lest they should think we are weary of their company. Christ brings such good news with him, as may bespeak better welcome with thee than a dejected countenance, and a disconsolate spirit. I tell thee, Christian, could such a message be carried to the damned, as might give them any hope (though never so little) of Salvation, it would make Hell it self a lightsome place, and tune those miserable souls into a rejoicing temper in the midst of their present torments. Blush then, and be ashamed, O ye drooping Saints, that a few thin clouds of some short afflictions, coming over your heads, should so wrap you up in the darkness of your spirits, as that the hope of Heaven, whither you look at last to come, should not be able in a moment to dispel and turn your sorrow into a ravishment of joy and comfort.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, When with thy rejoicing of hope thou preservest an awful fear of God; *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy, Psal. 147. 11.* We too often see, that children forget to pay that respect and reverence which is due to their Parents; when once the estate is made sure unto them. And truly, though the Doctrine of Assurance cannot be charged with any such bitter fruit to grow naturally from it, as the *Remonstrants* and *Papists* would make us believe; yet we are too prone to abuse it; yea, the best of Saints may, after they have the love of God, with eternal life, passed over to them under the privy seal of Hopes assurance, be led so far into temptation, as to fall foully, and carry themselves very undutifully. Witness *David* and *Solomon*, whose saddest miscarriages were after God had obliged them by opening his very heart to them in such manifestations of his

love to them, as few are to be found that had the like; both father and son are checkt by God for this, and a blot left upon their History, on purpose to shew what a sad accent this gave to their sin, that they fell after such discoveries of divine love made to them, and also to leave us instances not barely of humane frailty, but of graces frailty in this life, and that in the most eminent Saints, such as were *Pen-men* of Holy Writ. That when our hope grows into greatest assurance, and this assurance spreads it self into highest rejoicing from the certainty of our expected glory, we should yet nourish a holy fear of God in our hearts, lest we grow crank, and forget God in the abundance of our peace. This holy fear will be to our joy, as the continual dropping of water on the Iron-work in the Fullers wheel, which keeps it from firing, or as the *pericardium* with which the God of Nature hath moated about the heart in our bodies, that by the water in it, the heart which is perpetually in motion, might be kept from being inflamed into a distemper'd heat. The Devil is pleas'd if he can at any time get a Saint to sin, but he glorieth most, when he can lay them in the dirt, in their Holy-day cloaths, as I may so say, and make them defile themselves when they have their garments of Salvation on, I mean those which God hath in some more than ordinary discovery of himself, clothed them withal; if at such a time he can be too hard for them, then he hath, he thinks, a fair occasion given him to go, and insultingly show God what pickle his child is in, and hold up the Christians assurance and comfort mockingly (as they their brothers coat to their farther) besmeared with the blood and filth of some beastly sin he hath thrown him into, and ask God, Is this the assurance thou hast given him of Heaven? and this the garment of Salvation which thou didst put on him? see where he hath laid it, and what a case he hath made it in: O what gracious soul trembles not at the thought of putting such blasphemy into the mouth of the Devil to reproach the living God by! That Christian is the beloved Child, and shall be most made of by his Heavenly Father, who sits not down to loyter in the Sun-shine of Divine love, but gathers up his feet the nimbler in the way of duty, because his God is so kind to make his walk more cheerful and comfortable than others find it, and who loseth not his reverential fear of God, in Gods familiarity with him. *Moses* is a rare instance for this: Did ever the great God treat a mortal man, a Saint in flesh, with the like familiarity and condescension, as he did that holy man, with whom he spake mouth to mouth, and before whom he caused all his goodness to pass? *Exod. 34. 6.* And how bears he this transcending act of grace? Doth he grow bold, and forget his distance between God and him by this low stoop of the Divine Majesty to converse with him in such a humble manner, if I may so say? No, his heart was never in all his life more filled with the reverence of God than now: He trembled indeed, and quaked more ('tis very likely) on Mount *Sinai*, but his filial fear was as conspicuous now as then. It is true, this extraordinary manifestation of those soul-ravishing attributes of Gods love and goodness, especially his pardoning mercy to him that knew himself a sinner,

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and at that time made much more sensible thereof by the terror which the dreadful promulgation of the Law had left on his spirit, could not but exceedingly heighten his joy, and over-run his soul with a sweet love to so gracious a God: yet was not Moses his awful fear of God, drowned or lost

in the high tyde of these sweeter affections; for it follows, v. 8. *And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.* This favourite of Heaven, mark how he shews his fear of God most, when God he expresseth his love to him most.

CHAP. XI.

An exhortation to strengthen Hope, Press'd from three Arguments.

Use 3. **T**Hirdly, Labour, O ye Saints, to strengthen your Hope. There is as a weak faith, so wavering, unstedfast hope; this you are by the diligent use of all means to establish and consolidate. Now then *Hope* is firm and solid, when the Christian doth not fluctuate *formidine oppositi*; but by this Anchor-hold that hope hath on the promise, is kept from those dejections and tumultuous fears with which they that have no hope are swallowed up, and they whose hope is but weak, are sadly discompos'd and shaken. *Solidum est quod sui solius est plenum*, that is a solid body which is compact, and free from Heterogenial mixtures. The more pure gold is from dross, and whatever is of a different nature to it self, the more solid it is: So *Hope*, the more it is refined from groundless presumption on the one hand, or slavish fear and distrust on the other, the more solid and strong it is. This in Scripture is called the *assurance of hope*. Now to provoke you to a holy zeal in your endeavour after this,

S E C T. I.

First, Consider it is thy duty so to do; indeed by the *Papists* Doctrine, no man is bound to labour for such an assurance. But whether we should believe God or them, judge ye. What saith the Spirit of God, *Heb. 6. 11.* *We desire that every one of you, do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise.* Observe,

First, The thing he exhorts to endeavour for, *πρὸς τὴν πληροποίησιν τῆς ἐλπίδος*, to the full assurance of hope. They whose *Hope* is weak, sail but with a scant side-wind; The Apostle would have them go afore the wind, and be carried with a full gale to Heaven; which then is done, when the soul, like a sail spread to the wind, is so filled with the truth and goodness of the Promise, that it swells into an assured hope of what is promised, and rejoiceth in a certain expectation of what it shall have when it comes to the shore of eternity, though it be now tossed and weather-beaten with a thousand temptations and trials in its passage thither.

Secondly, Observe whom he presseth this duty upon, not some few choice Christians, as an enterprize laid out for them above the rest of their fellow-souldiers; but he lays it on every person that will prove himself a Christian, *We desire that every one*

of you do shew the same diligence, &c. In our civil Trade, and particular Worldly Calling, it were sinful for every poor man to propound such a vast estate to himself in his own desires as he sees some few, the wealthiest Merchants in a City, have got by their Trade, so as no less shall content him. But in the spiritual Trade of a Christian, it is very warrantable, for every Christian to covet to be as rich in grace as the best: *Paul* himself will not think himself wrong'd, if thou desirest to be as holy a man as himself was, and labour'st after as strong a faith and stedfast a hope as he had; yea, thou ought'st not to content thy self with what thou hast, if there were but one degree of grace more to be had, than what at present thou hast obtain'd. And

Thirdly, Observe what he imputes the weakness of the Saints grace to; not an impossibility of attaining to more, but their sloth and laziness; and therefore he opposeth this to that blessed frame of heart he so much wisheth them, *vers. 12.* *That ye be not slothful*: Indeed 'tis the diligent hand makes rich, as in this worlds goods, so in this heavenly treasure also.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, Labour to strengthen thy hope of Salvation, or thou wilt shew that thou little esteemest Christ and his salvation; as we prize any good, so we labour more or less to assure our selves of it. If a Prince should lose a pin from his sleeve, or a penny out of his purse, and one should bring him news they are found; the things are so inconsiderable, that he would not care whether it were true or not; but if his Kingdom lay at stake in the field, and intelligence comes, that his Army hath got the day, and beat the enemy, O how he would long to have his hope that is now raised a little, confirmed more strongly by another Post! Is Heaven worth so little, that you can be satisfied with a few probabilities, and uncertain may-be's you shall come thither? Thou basely despisest that blessed place, if thou beest no more solicitous to know the truth of thy title to it. When *Micaiah* seem'd to give *Ahab* (now advancing his Army against *Ramoth Gilead*) some hope of a victory, by bidding him go up and prosper; The thing being passionately desired by the King, he fears the worst (as indeed he had reason, for the *Prophets* speech was Ironical) and therefore cannot rest till he know more of this matter. *And the King said unto him, How oft shall I adjure thee that*

thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord, 1 Kings 22. 16. May be thou hast some loose wavering hopes of Heaven, floating in thy soul, if now thou didst think thy eternal woe or weale lay in the truth or fallhood of that hope, certainly thou wouldst search thy heart by the Word, and adjure thy conscience after an impartial review, to tell thee the naked truth, what thy state is, and whether thou mayest in Gods name, and with the leave of his Word hope it shall be thy portion or not; and this thou wouldst do, not hypocritically as that wretched King did (who adjured *Micajah* to tell him the truth, and then would not believe him, though he did it faithfully) but with great plainness of heart, it being about a business of no less importance than what shall become of thee to eternity. *Peter* when surprised with the tydings of Christs resurrection, though the report did not find such credit with him as it might, yet by his speedy running to, and looking into the Sepulchre, he shewed both how dearly he loved his Lord, as also how joyful a man he should be if the news held true, that he was alive. Thus Christian, though the promise of eternal life, hath not hitherto produced such an assurance of hope, that thou art the person that shalt undoubtedly enjoy it, yet shew what appreciating thoughts thou hast of that blissful state, by endeavouring to strengthen thy hope, and put thee out of doubt thereof.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Consider this also, in the last place, That thou knowest not, what stresses thy hope may be put to before thou diest. The wise Mariner doth vidual his ship for the longest day; he reckons on foul weather and cross winds which may retard his voyage, and make it more troublesome, though some find it a shorter cut, and fairer passage, and therefore he stores himself accordingly, knowing well, it is easier carrying provision to sea, than getting it there. *Non facile inveniuntur in adversitate presidia, quam fuerint in pace quesita*, a good speech of *Austin*. God himself tells us, we have need of patience, he means great store of patience, that after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise, *Heb. 10. 36*. And if of patience, then of hope; because patience bears all on hopes back. Now because we know not the certain degree of Hope that will serve our turn, (God having purposely concealed the weight of affliction and temptation he intends to lay on us) therefore we should never cease our endeavour to strengthen it. There are hard duties to be performed, and strong trials to be endured, and these require a hope proportionable. We are to hold fast the rejoicing of our hope unto the end, *Heb. 3. 6*. Now will the Christian of weak hope do this? he alas is like a leaky ship with a rich lading, the fear of sinking before she gets the Port, takes away the owners joy of the treasure she carries. Bid such a one rejoice in his inheritance that is laid up in Heaven for him, and he will tell you, he questions whether ever he shall come there. Patient waiting for mercy prorogued and deferred, is another hard duty, *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of*

the Lord. Now weak hope is short-breathed, and cannot stay long with any quietness. *Omne invalidum est querulum*; weak persons are commonly hardest to please; soon peevish and froward, if they have not what they would, and that when they desire it also. When *David*s faith and hope were under a distemper, then he falls out with all: The Prophet himself that brought him the news of a Kingdom, cannot escape his censure, and all because the promise staid longer before it was delivered than he expected; *I said in my haste, All men are liars, Psal. 116*. whereas the promise went not a day beyond its due time, but he missed of its true reckoning through his inordinate desire; but take him in his healthful temper, when his faith and hope are strong, and he is not so hasty then to call for a mercy out of Gods hands, but thinks his estate in Gods hands as safe as if it were paid into his own, *Psal. 65. 2*. Praise waiteth for thee, O Lord: Or Praise is silent for thee, *Jo the Hebr. חלה רמה* will bear it. As if the holy man had said, Lord, I do quietly wait for a time to praise thee; my soul is not in an up-roar because thou stayest, I am not murmuring, but rather stringing my Harp, and tuning my instrument with much patience and confidence, that I may be ready to strike up when the joyful news of my deliverance first comes. You have much ado to make the child quiet till Dinner, though he sees preparations for a great Feast; but one that is grown up will be soon pacified when he is kept a little longer than ordinary from his meal upon such an occasion. O Christian, tis our childishness and weakness of grace, (especially of our hope) that makes us so soon out of patience to wait Gods leisure; strengthen hope, and patience will grow with it. In a word, Christian, thou hast great trials and strong temptations to conquer, before you enter Heaven-Gates, and be clothed with your Garments of Salvation there. Now defend thy hope, and that will defend thee in these; strengthen that, and that will carry thee through them. The head, every member is officious to preserve it; The hands are lift up to keep off the blow, the feet run to carry the head from danger, the mouth will receive any unfavoury Pill to draw fumes and humours from the head. Salvation is to the soul, what the head is to the body, the principal thing it should labour to secure; and hope is to our Salvation, what the Helmet is to the Head. Now, if he be unwise that ventures his head under a weak Helmet in the midst of Bullets at the time of battel; then much more unwise he that hazards his Salvation with a weak Hope. Know, O Christian, the issue of the battel with thy enemy depends on thy hope, if that fail, all is lost. Thy hope is in conflicts with temptations and sufferings, as a Prince is amidst his Army, who puts life into them all, while he looks on and encourageth them to the battel, but if a report of the Kings being slain comes to their ears, their courage fails, and hearts faint; therefore *Ahab* would be held up in his Chariot to conceal his danger from his people, the knowledge of which would have cast a damp on their courage. Thy hope is the mark Satans Arrows are levell'd at; if possible, keep that from wounding; or if at any time his Dart reacheth it, and thy spirit begins to bleed of the wound which

he hath given thee, by questioning, Whether such Great sins can be pardoned as thou hast committed, such old festured sores, as thy lusts have been, can be ever cured, or afflictions that are so heavy, and have continued so long, can possibly be either endured, or removed. Now labour, as for thy life, to hold up thy hope though wounded in the Chariot of the promise, and bow not by despairing, to let the Devil trample on thy soul: So soon as thy hope gives up the ghost, will this cursed Fiend stamp thee under his foul feet, and take his full revenge of thee, and that without any power of thy soul to strike a stroke for thy defence: This will so dispirit thee, that thou wilt be ready to throw up all endeavour and

attendance on the means of Salvation; yea, desperately say, To what purpose is it to think of praying, hearing, and meditating, when there is no hope? What, should we send for the Physician when our friend is dead? What good will the chafing and rubbing the body do, when the head is severed from it? The Army broke up, and every one was sent to his City as soon as it was known that *Ahab* was dead. And so wilt thou cast off all thought of making any head against Sin and Satan, when thy hope is gone, but fall either into *Judas* his horror of conscience, or with *Cain*, turn Atheist, and bury the thoughts of thy desperate condition, in a heap of worldly projects.

CHAP. XII.

Wherein is contained Six Directions, how the Christian may get Hope strengthened.

I Come now to give a few words of counsel, How a Christian may best strengthen his *Hope*. Take them in these six particulars following.

SECT. I.

First, If thou meanest thy hope of Salvation should rise to any strength and solidness, study the Word of God diligently. The Christian is bred by the Word, and he must be fed by it also, or else his grace will die. That is the growing child that lies libbing ofteneft at the Breast. Now as God hath provided food in his Word to nourish every grace, so in the composition of the Scriptures he had a particular respect to the welfare and growth of the Saints hope, as one principal end of their writing; *Rom. 15. 4. That we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.* The Devil knows this so well; that his great labour is spent, to deprive the Christian of the help which the Word is stored with; and indeed therein he is not mistaken; for so long as this River is unblock'd up which makes glad the City of God, with the succours that are brought into them on the stream of its precious promises, he can never besiege them round, or put them to any great streights. Some therefore he deprives of their relief by meer sloth and laziness; they make a few fruitless complaints of their doubts and fears; like sluggards crying out of their wants and poverty as they lie in bed, but are loth to rise, and take any pains to be resolved of them by searching of the Word for their satisfaction; and these sell their comfort, of all others, the cheapest. Who will pity him, though he should starve to death, that hath bread before him; but loth to put his hand out of his bosome to carry it to his mouth. Others he abuseth by false Applications of the Word to their souls, partly through their weak understandings, and troubled spirits also, which discolour the truths of God, and misrepresent them to their judgements, whereby they come to be beaten with their own staff, even those promises which a skilful hand would knock down Satans temptations withal. The

Devil is a great Student in Divinity, and makes no other use of his Scripture-knowledge, than may serve his turn by Sophistry to do the Christian a mischief either by drawing him to sin, or into despair for sinning; like some wrangling Barreter, who gets what skill he can in the Law, meerly to make him the more able to put honest men to trouble by his vexatious suit. Well, if Satan be so conversant in the Word to weaken thy hope, and deprive thee of thy inheritance, what reason hast thou then to furnish thy self with a holy skill to maintain thy right, and defend thy hope?

Now in thy study of the Word, propound these two ends, and closely pursue them till thou hast obtain'd them.

First, Labour to clear up to thy understanding from the Word, what are the conditions required by God of every soul that hath his grant and warrant to hope assuredly for life and salvation in the other World. Some conditions there are required to be found in all such, is without all doubt, or else it were free for all, be they what they will, and live how they list, actually to lay claim to a right in Heaven and Salvation; if God had set no bounds at *Sinai*, and said nothing who should come up the Mount, and who nor, it had been no more presumption in any of the company to have gone up than in *Moses*; and if God requires no conditions in the person, that is, to hope, then heaven is a Common for one as well as other to crowd into; then the beastly sinner may touch Gods holy Mount as well as the Saint, and fear no stoning for his bold adventure. But this sure is too fulsom Doctrine for any judicious conscience to digest. Well, having satisfied thy self, that if ever thou hast true *Hope*, thou must also have the conditions; enquire what they are. Now the Word holds forth two sorts of conditions according to the two different covenants. *First*, There is a Covenant of Nature, or Law-Covenant, which God made with innocent *Adam*, and the condition of this, was perfect obedience of the person that claim'd happiness by it; this is not the condition now required; and he that stands groping

ping at this door, in hope to enter into life by it, shall not only find it nail'd up, and no entrance that way to be had, but he also deprives himself of any benefit of that true door, which stands open, and by which all pass that get thither; *Galat. 5. 5. Whoever of you is justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace.* You must therefore enquire what the other Covenant is, and that is a Covenant of Grace, as that other was of Nature, of Reconciliation to make God and man friends, as that was a Covenant to preserve those friends who had never fallen out.

Now the condition of this Covenant, is, Repentance and Faith: See for this, *Luke 24. 47. Job. 3. 36. Acts 2. 38. ch. 5. 31. ch. 20. 21. Gal. 5. 5.* Labour therefore to give a firm assent to the truth of these promises, and hold it as an indisputable and inviolable principle, That whoever sincerely repents of his sins, and with a faith unfeigned, receiveth Christ to be his Lord and Saviour, this is the person that hath the Word and Oath of a God, that cannot possibly lye, for the pardon of his sins, and salvation of his soul. What service a strong assent to this will do thee towards exerting thy hope, thou wilt, by and by, see: It is the very basis thereof; the weight of the Christians whole building bears so much on this, that the Spirit of God, when he speaks in Scripture of Evangelical Truths and Promises, on which poor sinners must build their hopes for Salvation, he doth it with the greatest avowement of any other truths, and usually adds some circumstance or other that may put us out of all doubt concerning the certainty, and unalterableness of them. *Isa. 53. 5. Surely he hath born our griefs; there is no question to be made of it, but it was our portion he drank, our debt he paid.* What end could he have besides this in so great sufferings? Was it to give us a pattern of patience how we should suffer? This is true, but not all, for some of our fellow Saints have been admirable instances of this. Surely there was more than this, *He bare our sorrows, and was wounded for our transgressions.* This, this was the great business, worthy of the Son of God his undertaking, which none of our fellow Saints could do for us. So *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* As if he had said, Fear no cheat or imposture here, it is as true as Truth it self; for such is he that said it; If you believe not this, you are worse than a Devil: He cannot shut this truth out of his conscience, though the unwelcome that ever came to his knowledge, *1 Job. 1. 9. If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.* What can the poor penitent fear, when that Attribute is become his friend, that first made God angry with him? Yea, so fast a friend as to stand bound for the performance of the promise, which even now was so deeply engaged to execute the threatening on him? *Psalm 6. 17. Wherein, God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath.* What security could we have ask'd more of a deceitful man, than the faithful God of his own accord gives? The Romans did not give their Magistrates Oaths, suppo-

sing the dignity and honour of their persons and place were Bond strong enough to make them true and righteous. Surely then Gods Word would have deserved credit, though it had not an Oath to be its Surety, yet God condescends to this, that he may sink the truth of what he saith, deeper into our minds, and leave the print fairer and fuller in our assents to the same, when set on with the weight of Asseverations and Oaths.

Secondly, Having found what is the condition of the Covenant, rest not satisfied, till thou findest this condition to be wrought in thy own soul, and art able to say thou art this Repenting and Believing sinner. A strong hope results from the clear evidence it hath for both these. We read in Scripture of a threefold Assurance. First, An assurance of understanding, *Coloss. 2. 2.* Secondly, An assurance of Faith, *Heb. 10. 22.* Thirdly, An assurance of Hope, *Heb. 6. 11.* And it is a good note which an acute Doctor of our own hath upon them, *That these three make up one practical Syllogism, wherein, Knowledge forms the Proposition, Faith makes the Assumption, and Hope draws the Conclusion, D. A. Tac. Sa. p. 126.* I do (saith the Christian assuredly) know from the Word, that the repenting believing sinner shall be saved, my conscience also tells me that I do unfeignedly repent and believe, Therefore I do hope firmly that I shall (however unworthy otherwise) be saved. Now we know there can be no more in the Conclusion, than is in the Premises; so that as the force is which the Christian puts forth in his assent to the truth of the Promise, and the evidence is, which he hath that the condition of the Promise (*viz.* Faith and Repentance) is wrought in his soul, so will his Hope be weak or strong. Indeed it can be no otherwise: if his assent to the truth of the Promise be weak, or his evidence for the truth of his Faith and Repentance be dark and uncertain, his hope that is born (as I may so say) of these, must needs partake of its Parents infirmities, and be it self weak and waverling, as they are from which it results.

SECT. II.

Direct. 2. Secondly, Would'st thou have thy hope strong? Then keep thy conscience pure. Thou canst not defile this, but thou wilt weaken that. *Living godly in this present world, and looking for the blessed hope laid up for us in the other, are both conjoyn'd, Titus 2. 13.* A soul wholly void of godliness, must needs be as destitute of all true hope; and the godly person, that is loose and careless in his holy walking, will soon find his hope languishing. All sin is Aguish meat, it disposeth the soul that tampers with it, to trembling fears, and shakings of heart: But such as are deliberately committed and plotted, they are to the Christians hope, as poison to the spirits of his body, which presently drinks them up. They, in a manner, exanimate the Christian; They make the thoughts of God terrible to the soul, which, when he is in a holy frame, are his greatest joy and solace, *I thought on God and was troubled, Psalm 77. 3.* They make him afraid to look on God

X Covenant of Grace.

in a duty, much more to look for God in the day of judgement. Can the servant be willing his Master should come home, when he is in his ryot and excess? Mr. Calvin when some wisht him to forbear some of his labours, especially his Night-studies, askt those his Friends, *Whether they would have his Lord find him idle, when he came?* O God forbid, Christian, that Death should find thee wanton and negligent in thy walking, that he should surprize thee lying in the puddle of some sin unrepented of! This would be a sad meeting! O how loth wouldst thou then be to dye, and go to the great Audit, where thou must give up thy accounts for eternity! will thy hope then be in case to carry thee up with joy to that solemn work? Can a bird fly, when one of her wings is broke? Faith and a good Conscience are Hopes two wings; if therefore thou hast wounded thy conscience by any sin, renew thy repentance, that so thou may'st act faith for the pardon of it, and acting faith, may'st redeem thy hope, when the mortgage that is now upon it, shall be taken off. If a Jew had pawn'd his Bed-cloaths, God provided mercifully, it should be restored before Night, *For (saith he) that is his covering, wherein shall he sleep?* *Exod. 22. 27.* Truly Hope is the Saints covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave, *My flesh (saith David) shall rest in hope, Psal. 16. 9.* O Christian, bestir thy self to redeem thy hope before this Sun of thy temporal life go down upon thee, or else thou art sure to lie down in sorrow. A sad going to the bed of the grave he hath, that hath no hope of a Resurrection to life.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Resort to God daily, and beg a stronger hope of him: That is the way the *Apostle* took to help the Saints at Rome to more of this precious grace, *Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.* God you see is the God of hope; and not only of the first seed and habit, but of the whole increment and abounding of it in us also: He doth not give a Saint the first grace of conversion, and then leave the improvement of it wholly to his skill and care; as sometimes a child hath a stock at first to set up, and never hath more help from his father, but by his own good Husbandry advanceth his little beginnings into a great estate at last. But rather as the Corn in the Field, that needs the influences of Heaven to flower and ripen it for Harvest, as much as to quicken it in the clods when first thrown in: And therefore be sure thou humbly acknowledgest God by a constant waiting on him for growth. *The young Lions are said to seek their meat from God, Psal. 104. 2.* That is, God hath taught them, when hungry, to expresse their wants by crying and lifting up their voice, which, did they know God to be their Maker, they would direct to him for supply. As we see the little babe that at first only expresseth its wants by crying, doth so soon as it knows the mother, direct his moan to her; thou knowest Christian that thou art at thy heavenly Fathers finding. He knows indeed what thou wantest,

but he stays his supplies till thou criest, and this will make him draw forth his breast presently. Doth God take care for beasts in the field? Surely then much more will he for thee his child in his house, and for thy soul above all. Thou mayest possibly pray for more riches, and be denied; but a prayer for more grace is sure to speed.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, If you would strengthen your hope, labour to encrease your love. There is a secret, yet powerful influence that love hath on hope. *Moses* we will easily grant, greatly befriended the *Israelites*, when he slew the *Egyptian*, that fought with him. Love kills slavish fear, one of the worst enemies hope hath in the Christians heart, and thereby strengthens hopes hand. He that plucks up the weeds, helps the Corn to grow: and he that purges out the disease, makes way for natures strengthening. 'Tis slavish fear oppresseth the Christians spirit that he cannot act hope strongly. Now, *love casts our fear, 1 John 4. 18.* The free-woman will cast out the bond woman. Slavish fear is one of *Hagar's* breed, an affection that keeps all in bondage that hath it; this love cannot brook. Shall I, saith the loving soul, fear he will hurt me, or be hard to me, that loves me, and I him so dearly? away unworthy thoughts, here is no room for such company as you are in my bosom. *Love thinketh no ill, 1 Cor. 13. 5.* That is, it neither wisheth evil to, nor suspects evil of another. The more thou lovest Christ, the less thou wilt be jealous of him; and the less jealous thou art of him, the more strongly wilt thou hope in him, and comfortably wait for him. Hence these two graces are so often mated in Scripture, *2 Thes. 3. 5. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for Christ.* Love him, and you will wait for him. So *Jude 21. Keep your selves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life.*

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Be much in the exercise of your hope. Repeated acts strengthen habits. Thus the little wadling child comes to go strongly, by going often. You have no more money in your chest at the years end than when you laid it there, nay 'tis well if rust or thieves have not made it less. But you have more by trading with it than your first stock amounted unto. *Thou shouldest have put my money to the Ex-changers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury, saith Christ to the scornful servant, Matth. 25. 27.* Now the promises are hopes object to act upon. A man can as well live without air, as faith and hope without a promise; yea, without frequent sucking in the refreshment of the promises, and therefore be much in meditation of them; set some time apart for the purpose. You that love your healths, do not content your selves with the air that comes to you as you sit at work in your house or shop, but you will walk out into the fields sometimes, to take the air more fresh and full. And if thou

thou beest a wise Christian, thou wilt not satisfie thy self with the short converse thou hast by the by with the promises, as now and then they come into thy mind in thy calling, and when thou art about other imployments, but wilt walk aside on purpose to enjoy a more fixed and solitary meditation of them. This were of admirable use, especially if the Christian hath skill to sort the promises, and lay aside the provision made in them suitable to his case in particular. Sometimes the Christian is at a stand when he remembers his past-sins, and his hope is quite dasht out of countenance while they stare on his conscience with their grim looks. Now it were excellent for the Christian to pick out a promise, where he may see this objection answered, and hope triumphing over it. This was *David's* very case, *Psal. 130.* he grants himself to be in a most deplored condition, if God should reckon with him strictly, and give him *quid pro quo*, ways suitable to his work. *If thou Lord shouldst mark iniquities, who can stand? ver. 3.*

But then, *ver. 4.* he puts his soul out of all fear of God his taking this course with poor penitent souls, by laying down this comfortable conclusion, as an indubitable truth. *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* That is, there is forgiveness in thy nature, thou carriest a pardoning heart in thy bosom: yea, there is forgiveness in thy promise; thy merciful heart doth not only incline thee to thoughts of forgiving, but thy faithful promise binds thee to draw forth the same unto all that humbly and seasonably lay claim thereunto. Now, this foundation laid, see what superstructure this holy man raiseth, *ver. 5.* *I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.* As if he had said, Lord, I take thee at thy word, and am resolved by thy grace to wait at this door of thy promise, never to stir thence, till I have my promised dole (forgiveness of my sins) sent out unto me. And this is so sweet a morsel, that he is loth to eat it alone, and therefore he sets down the dish, even to the lower end of the table, that every godly person may taste with him of it, *ver. 7, 8.* *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.* As if he had said, that which is a ground of hope to me, notwithstanding the clamour of my sins, affords a solid and firm bottom to any true *Israelite* or sincere soul in the world, did he but rightly understand himself, and the mind of God in his promise. Yea, I have as strong a faith for such as my own soul, and durst pawn the eternity of its happiness upon this principle, That God shall redeem every sincere *Israelite* from all his iniquities. This, this is the way to knock down our sins indeed; and Satan, when he comes to reproach us with them, and by their batteries to dismount our hope. Sometimes a qualm comes over the Christians heart meerly from the greatness of the things hoped for. What? saith the poor soul, seems it a small thing for me to hope, that of an enemy I should become a son and heir to the great God! What? a rebel! and not only hope to be pardoned, but prove a favourite, yea such a one, as to have robes of glory making for me in Heaven, where I shall stand among those that minister

about the Throne of God in his Heavenly Court, and that before I have done him any more service here on Earth? O it is too great good news to prove true. Thus the poor soul stands amazed, as the *Disciples*, when the first tidings of the *Lords* resurrection surprized them, and is ready to think its hope but an idle tale with which Satan abuseth it, *ut presumendo speret & sperando pereat.* That he may presume to hope, and perish with his presumption.

Now Christian, that thou mayst be able to stride over this stumbling block; be sure to observe those prints of Gods greatness and infinitude that are stampd upon the promise, sometimes you have them exprest, on purpose to free our thoughts, and ease our hearts of this scruple. When God promised great things what he would do for *Abraham*; to make them more credible, and easily believed, he adds, *I am God Almighty, Gen. 17. 1.* and so *Isa. 55.*

7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon. But how can this possibly be done, that in the turn of a hand (as it were) such a great favour can be obtained, which among men could hardly be done in a life-time spent in suing for it? O that is easily answered. He tells you he is not a sorry man, but a God, and hath a way by himself in pardoning wrongs, which none can follow him in; for it is *as far above our ways as the Heavens are above the Earth.*

This Christian observe, and it will be a key to unlock all promises, and let you in unto the untold treasures that are in them; yea, make the greatest promise in the Bible easie to be believed. When ever you read any promise, remember whole bond it is, the word of no other than God. And when you think of God, be sure you do not narrow him up in the little compass of your finite apprehensions, but conceive of him always as an infinite being, whose centre is every where, and circumference no where. When you have raised your thoughts to the highest, then know you are as far, yea infinitely farther from reaching his glory and immensity, than a man is from touching the body of the Sun with his hand when got upon a hill or mountain.

This is to ascribe greatness to God, as we are commanded, *Deut. 32. 3.* And it will admirably facilitate the work of believing. Suppose a poor cripple should be sent for by a Prince to Court, with a promise to adopt him for his son, and make him heir to his Crown; this might well seem incredible to the poor man, when he considers what a leap it is from his Beggars Cottage to the state of a Prince; no doubt if the promise had been to prefer him to a place in an Hospital, or some ordinary pension for his maintenance, it would be easilier credited by him, as more proportionable to his low condition; yet the greatness of the Prince, and the delight that such take to be like God himself, by shewing a kind of creating power to raise some, as it were, from nothing, unto the highest honours a Subject is capable of, thereby to oblige them as their creatures to their service, This I say might help such a one to think this strange accident not altogether impossible. Thus here, should a poor soul spend all his thoughts on his own unmeet-

ness

ness and unworthiness to have heaven and eternal life conferred on him, it were not possible he should ever think so well of himself, as that he should be one of those glorious creatures that were to enjoy it; but when the greatness of God is believed, and the infinite pleasure he takes to demonstrate that greatness this way, by making miserable creatures happy, rather than by perpetuating their miseries in an eternal state of damnation, and what cost he hath been at to clear a way for his mercy freely to act in; and in a word, what a glorious name this will gain him in the thoughts of those he thus exalts. These things (which are all to be found in the word of promise) well weighed, and acknowledged, cannot but open the heart, though shut with a thousand bolts, to entertain the promise, and believe all is truth that God there saith, without any more questioning the same. A taste I have given in one or two particulars (you see) how the promises may be suited to answer the particular Objections raised against our hope; it were easie here to multiply instances, and to pattern any other case with promises for the purpose; but this will be most effectually done by you, who know your own Scruples better than another can; and be such true friends to your own souls, as to take a little pains therein. The labour in gathering a few simples in the field, and making them up into a medicine by the direction of the Physician, is very well paid for, if the poor man finds it doth him good, and restores him to health.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, File up thy experiences of past mercies, and thy hope will grow stronger for the future, *Experience worketh hope*, Rom. 5. 4. He is the best Christian that keeps the History of Gods gracious dealings with him most carefully, so that he may read it in his past experiences, when at any time his thoughts trouble him, and his spiritual rest is broken with distracting fears for the future. This is he that will pass the Night of affliction and temptation with comfort and hope, while others, that have taken no care to pen down in their memories (at least) the remarkable instances of Gods love and favour to them in the course of their lives, will find the want of this sweet companion in their sorrowful hours, and be put to sad plunges; yea well, if they be not driven to think their case desperate, and past all hope. Sometimes a little writing is found in a mans study that helps to save his estate, for want of which he had gone to Prison, and there ended his days. And some one experience remembred, keeps the soul from despair, a Prison which the Devil longs to have the Christian in. *This I recal, therefore have I hope*, Lam. 3. 21. David was famous for his hope, and not less eminent for his care to observe and preserve the experiences he had of Gods goodness. He was able to recount the dealings of God to him; They were so often the subject of his meditation, and matter of his discourse, that he had made them familiar to him. When his hope is at a loss, he doth but rub his memory up a little, and he recovers himself presently, and chides himself for his

weakness, *I said, this is my infirmity; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High*, Pl. 77. The Hound when he hath lost the scent, hunts backward, and so recovers it, and pursues his Game with louder cry than ever. Thus Christian, when thy hope is at a loss for the life to come, and thou questionest thy salvation in another world, then look backward, and see what God hath already done for thee in this world. Some promises have their day of payment here, and others we must stay to receive in heaven. Now the payment which God makes of some promises here, is an Earnest given to our faith, that the other also shall be faithfully discharged when their Date expires; as every judgement inflicted here on the wicked, is sent as a penny in hand of that wrath, the full sum whereof God will make up in Hell. Go therefore, Christian, and look over thy receipts. God hath promised, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; no not in this life, Rom. 6. 14. It is the present state of a Saint in this life intended there; canst thou find this promise made good to thee? is the power of sin broke, and the Scepter wrung out of this Kings hand, whom once thou didst as willingly obey, as ever Subject his Prince? yea, canst thou find that he hath but begun to fall by thy unthroning him in thy heart and affections? Do'st thou now look on sin not as thou wert wont, for thy Prince, but as an Usurper, whose Tyranny, by the grace of God, thou art resolved to shake off, both as intolerable to thee, and dishonourable to God, whom thou now acknowledgest to be thy rightful Lord, and to whose holy Laws thy heart most freely promiseth obedience? This (poor soul) may assure thee, that thou shalt have a full dominion over sin in heaven ere long, which hath begun already to lose his power over thee on earth. It is observable how David rears up his hope to expect heavens perfect state of holiness, from his begun sanctification on earth. First, he declares his holy resolution for God, and then his high expectation from God, *Psal. 17. 15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness*. Hast thou found Gods supporting hand in all thy temptations and troubles, whereby thou art kept from sinking under them? A David would feed his hope for eternal salvation with this, *Psal. 73. 23. Thou hast holden me by my right hand*: Now observe Hopes inference, *vers. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory*.

And as experiences carefully kept, and wisely improved, would conduce much to the strengthening the Christians hope on its chief object, Salvation; so also would they lift up its head above all those distracting fears which arise in the Christians heart, and put him to much trouble, from those crosses and afflicting providences that befall him in this life. Certainly David would have been more scared with the big looks and brag department of that proud Goliath, had not the remembrance of the Bear and the Lion which he slew, brought relief to him and kept them down. But he had slain this uncircumcised Philistin in a figure, when he tore in pieces those unclean beasts; and therefore when he marches to him, this is the shield which he lifts up to cover himself

himself with, 1 Sam. 17. 37. *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Bear; He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistin.* If experiences were no ground for hope in future streights (temporary now I mean) then they would not have the force of an Argument in Prayer; but Saints use their experiences to do them service in this case, and make account they urge God very close and home, when they humbly tell him what he hath already done for them, and expect he should therefore go on in his fatherly care over them, Psal. 22. 21. *Save me from the Lyons mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns:* And no doubt a gracious soul may pray in faith from his past experience, and expect a satisfactory answer to that prayer, wherein former mercies are his plea for what he wants at present. God himself intends his people more comfort from every mercy he gives them, than the mercy it self singly and abstractly considered, amounts to. Suppose (Christian) thou hast been sick, and God hath at thy humble prayer pluckt thee out of the very jaws of Death, when thou wert even going down his throat almost; the comfort of this particular mercy is the least God means thee therein; for he would have thee make it a help to thy faith, and a store to thy hope, when shaken by any future freight whatever, Psal. 74. 14. *Thou brakest the head of the Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the Wilderness.* God in that mercy at the Red Sea (we see) is thinking what should have to live on for forty years together, and looks that they should not only feast them-

selves at present with the joy of this stupendous mercy; but powder it up in their memories, that their faith might not want a meal in that hungry Wilderness, all the while they were to be in it. Experiences are like a cold Dish reserved at a Feast; sometimes the Saint sits down with nothing else on his Table, but the promise, and his experience; and he that cannot make a soul-refreshing meal with these two Dishes, deserves to fast. Be sure, Christian, thou observest this in every mercy, what is matter of present thankfulness, and what is ground of future hope. Anchor is called *A door of hope*, Hosea 2. 15. God when he gives one mercy, he opens a door for him to give, and us to expect more mercy through it. God compares his promise to the rain which maketh the earth bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, Isa. 55. 10. Why shouldst thou, O Christian, content thy self with half the benefit of a mercy? When God performs his promise, and delivers thee out of this trouble, and that freight, thou art exceedingly comforted, may be, with the mercy, and thy heart possibly enlarged at present into thankfulness for the same. It is well here is bread for the eater, something that at present feeds thee. But where is the seed for the sower? The Husbandman doth not spend all his Corn that he reaps, but saves some for seed, which may bring him another Crop. So Christian, thou shouldst not only feast thy self with the joy of thy mercy, but save the remembrance of it as Hope-seed, to strengthen thee to wait on God for another mercy, and further help in a needful time.

CHAP. XIII.

An Objection answered with two or three reflections, useful for our improving Experiences.

Objection. BUT you will possibly say, How can a Saints past experience be so helpful to his Hope for the future, when God (we see) often crosses the Saints experiences? He delivers them out of one sickness, and takes them away may be with the next; he saves them in one battel without scratch or hurt, and in another, a while after, they are killed or wounded; how then can a Saint ground and bottom his hope from a past deliverance, to expect deliverance in the like freight again?

Answer. First, There is the same power still in God, that was then; what he did once for thee, he can with as much ease do again; and this is one way thy Experiences may help thee. Thou hast seen God make bare his arm, so that except thou think it that he since hath lost the strength or use of it, and is become at last a God with a lame hand, Hope hath an object to act upon, and such a one as will lift thy head above water. Indeed the soul never grows in despair, till it hath lost its hold on the power of God; when it questions whether God will deliver, this is a sad leak (I confess) and will let in a thousand fears into the soul; yet so long as the Christian can use this Pump, I mean, act faith on the

power of God, and believe that God can deliver when he pleases; though it will not clear the ship of his soul of all its fears, yet it will keep it from quite sinking, because it will preserve him in a seeking posture, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, Mark 1. and for thee to say, God cannot deliver, who hath been an eye-witness to what he hath done, were not only to betray thy great unbelief, but to forfeit thy reason as a man also.

But Secondly, to give a more close answer to the question. The Saint from his former experiences (even of temporal salvations) may, yea ought not only believe that God can, but also that he will save him in all future streights and dangers of this nature; only, he cannot conclude that he will do it in the same way as in former deliverances. And none I hope will say, if he hath deliverance, that his experiences are crossed, because God doth use another method in the conveyance of it to them. A debt may be fully satisfied, as with money, so with that which is money-worth, except the Bond restrains the payment other-wise. Now, there is no clause to be found in any promise for temporal mercies, that binds God to give them in specie, or in kind.

Spiritual mercies (such I mean as are saving and essential to the Saints happiness) these indeed are promised to be given in kind, because there is nothing equivalent that can be paid in lieu of them; But temporal mercies are of such an inferior nature, that a compensation and recompence may be easily given in their stead; Yea, God never denies these to a Saint, but for his gain and abundant advantage. Who will say the poor Saint is a loser, whose purse God denieth to fill with gold and silver, but filleth his heart with contentation? Or the sick Saint, when God saves him not by restoring to former health, but by translating to Heaven? And so much may suffice for answer to the Objection propounded.

I shall wind up this head with two or three reflexions to be used by the Christian, for his better improving past-experiences, when he is at a plunge.

experiences. First, Look back, Christian, to thy past-experiences, and enquire whether thou canst not find, that thy God hath done greater matters for thee, than this which thou now hast so many disquieting fears and despairing thoughts about. I will suppose thy present streight great; but wert thou never in a greater, and yet God did at last set thy feet in a large place? Thou art now in a sad and mournful posture, but hath not he brightned a darker cloud than this thou art now under, and led thee out of it into a state of light and joy? Surely thy staggering hope may prevent a fall by catching hold of this experience. Art thou not ashamed to give thy self for lost, and think of nothing but drowning in a less storm, than that out of which God hath formerly brought thee safe to land? See David relieving his hope by recognizing such an experiment as this, *Thou hast saved my soul from death, wilt thou not keep my feet from falling? Psal. 56. 13.* Hast thou given me the greater, and wilt thou stand with me for the less. Haply thy present fear (Christian) is Apostasie; thou shalt one day fall by the hand of thy sins, this runs in thy thoughts, and thou canst not be perswaded otherwise. Now it is a fit time to recal the day of Gods converting grace. Darest thou deny such a work to have passed upon thee? If not, why then shouldst thou despair of perseverance! that was the day wherein he saved thy soul, *This day (saith Christ to Zachaeus) is salvation come to thy house, Luke 19. 9.* And did God save thy soul by converting grace, and will he not keep thy feet from falling, by his sustaining grace? Was it not both more mercy and power to take thee out of the power of sin and Satan, than it will cost him to preserve thee from falling into their hands again? Surely the Israelites would not so often have fear'd provision in the Wilderness, had they remembered with what a high hand God did bring them out of Egypt. But may be, it is some outward affliction that distresseth thee; is it greater than the Churches was in cruel bondage and captivity? yet she had something to recal, that put a new life into her hope, *Lam. 3. God is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope.* See, she makes a spiritual mercy (because incomparably greater of the two) a ground of hope for temporal salvation which is less. And hast not thou, Christian, chosen him for thy portion? Do'st thou not look for a Heaven to enjoy

him in for ever? And can any Dungeon of outward affliction be so dark, that this hope will not enlighten? Recal thy experiences of his love to thy soul, and thou canst not be out of hope for thy body and outward condition. He that hath laid up a portion in heaven for thee, will lay out surely all the expences thou needest in thy way thither.

Secondly, Remember how oft God hath confuted thy fears, and proved thy unbelief a false Prophet. Hath he not knockt at thy door with inward comfort and outward deliverances, when thou hadst put out the Candle of Hope, given over looking for him, and been ready to lay thy self down on the bed of despair; Thus he came to *Hezekiah*, after he had peremptorily concluded his case desperate, *Isa. 38. 10, 11.* Thus to the Disciples in their unbelieving dumps, *We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, Luke 24. 21.* They speak as if now they were in doubt whether they should own their former faith or no; hath it not been formerly thus with thee? wert thou never at so sad a pass, the storm of thy fears so great, that the Anchor of Hope even came home, and left thee to feed with musing and despairing thoughts, and if now thy everlasting Night were come, and no morning tale more expected by thee? yet even then thy God proved them all Lyars, by an unlookt for surprize of mercy, with which he stole sweetly in upon thee? If so, press and urge this experience home upon thy self to encourage thy hope in all future temptations. What, O my soul! (thou shouldst say) wilt thou again be scared with these false alarms! Again, lend an ear to thy distrustful desponding thoughts which so oft thou hast found lyars, rather than believe the report of the promise, which never put thy hope to shame, as these have done. The Saints are oft feeding their hopes on the carcass of their slain fears. The time which God chose, and the instrument he used to give the captive Jews their Gaol-delivery and liberty to return home, were so incredible to them (who now lookt rather to be ground in pieces by those two Millstones, the Babylonian within, and the Persian without the City) than when it came to pass (like *Pearl* whom the Angel had carry'd out of Prison, *Acts 12.*) it was some time before they could come to themselves, and resolve whether it was a real truth, or but a pleasing dream, *Psal. 126. 1.* Now see, what effect this strange disappointment of their fears had upon their hope for afterward. First, it sends them to the Throne of Grace for the accomplishment of what was so marvellously begun, *ver. 3, 4. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord.* They have got a handhold by this experiment of his power and mercy, and they will not now let him go till they have more; yea, their hope is raised to such a pitch of confidence, that they draw a general conclusion from this particular experience for the comfort of themselves, or others in any future distress, *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy; he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him, ver. 6.*

Thirdly, Remember what sinful distempers have broke out in thy afflictions and temptations, and how

How God hath, notwithstanding these, carry'd on a work of deliverance for thee. So that thou may'st say, in respect of these enemies in thy bosom, what David spake triumphantly in regard of his enemies without, that *God hath prepared a table for thee in the presence of thy enemies*, yea, of his enemies: while thy corruptions have been stirring and acting against him, his mercy hath been active for thy deliverance. O what a Cordial-draught would this be to thy fainting hope! That which often sinks the Christians heart in any distress, inward or outward, and even weighs down his head of hope that it cannot look up to God for help and succour at such a time, is the sense of those sinful infirmities which then discover themselves in him. How, saith the poor soul, can I look that God should raise me out of this sickness, wherein I have bewrayed so much impatience and frowardness? Or out of that temptation, in which I have so little exercised faith, and discovered so much unbelief? Surely I must behave my self better, before any good news be sent from Heaven to me. It is well, poor Christian, thou art so sensible of thy sins as to be thy own accuser, and prevent Satans doing it for thee; yet be not oppress'd into discouragement by them. Remember, how God hath answer'd the like Objections formerly, and saved thee with a *notwithstanding*; if these could have hardned his bowels against thee, Hadst thou been alive, yea out of Hell at this day? Didst thou ever receive a mercy of which

God might not have made stoppage upon this very account that makes thee now fear he will not help thee? Or if thou hast not an experience of thy own at hand (which were strange) then borrow one of other Saints; David is an instance beyond exception. This very circumstance with which his deliverance was (as I may say) enamel'd, did above all affect his heart, *I said in my haste, All mens are lyars; what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefis, Ps. 116: 11, 12.* He remembred his sinful and distemper'd carriage, and this he mentions, as to take shame for the same, so to winde up his heart to the highest peg of thankfulness: He knows not how to praise God enough for that mercy which found him giving the lye to Gods Messenger, even Samuel himself that was sent to tell him it was a coming. And he doth not only make this circumstance an incentive to praise, for what is past; but lays it down as a ground of Hope for the future, *Psalm 31. I said in my haste, I am cut off from thine eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cryed unto thee.* As if he had said, When I pray'd with so little faith, that I as it were unprayed my own prayer, by concluding my case in a manner desperate; yet God pardoned my hasty spirit, and gave me that mercy which I had hardly any faith to expect: And what use doth he make of this experience, but to raise every Saints hope in a time of need? *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord, v. 24.*

CHAP. XI.

An Exhortation to them that want this Helmet of Hope.

UPON you exhorted that are yet without this Helmet to provide your selves with it. Certainly if you be but in your right wits, 'tis the first thing you will go about, and that with sober sadness, especially may but three considerations take place in your thoughts.

SECT. I.

First, How deplored a thing it is to be in a hopeles state. The *Apostle, Ephes. 2. 12.* makes him to be *without God*, that is without hope, *having no hope and being without God in the world.* God to the soul is, what the soul is to the body, if that be so vile, and noisome a thing, when it hath lost the soul that keeps it sweet; what is thy soul when nothing of God is in it? *The heart of the wicked is little worth* (saith *Salomon*) and why? but because it hath not God to put a value on it. If God who is light be not in thy understanding, thou art blind, and what is an eye whose sight is out, fit for, but to help thee to break thy neck? If God be not in thy conscience to pacifie and comfort it, thou must needs be full of horror or void of sense; a raging devil, or a stupid Atheist: If God be

not in thy heart and affections to purifie them, thou art but a shoal of fish, a sink of sin. If God be not in thee, the Devil is in thee; for mans heart is a house that cannot stand empty. In a word, thou canst not well be without this hope, neither in life nor death; not in life, what comfort canst thou take in all the enjoyments thou hast in this life, without the hope of a better? A sad Legacy it is which shuts the rebellious child from all claim to the inheritance. Thou hast an estate it may be, but 'tis all you must look for. And is it not a dagger at the heart of thy joy, to think thy portion is paid thee here, which will be spent by that time the Saint comes to receive his? Much less tolerable is it to be without this hope in a dying hour; who can without horror think of leaving this world, though full of sorrows, that hopes for no ease in the other? The condemned Malefactor, as ill as he likes his smoaky hole in the prison, had rather be there, than accept of deliverance at the hangmans hand; he had rather live still in his stinking dungeon, than exchange it for a gibbet. And greater reason hath the hopeles soul (if he understands himself) to wish he may spend his eternity on earth, though in the poorest hole, or cave in it, and that under the most exquisite torment of Stone or Gout, than to be eased of that pain with hells torment.

ment. Hence is the sad confusion in the thoughts of guilty wretches, when their souls are summoned out of their bodies: this makes the very pangs of death stronger than they would be, if these dear friends had but a hopeful parting; If the shriek and mournful outcry of some friends in the room of a dying man, may so disturb him as to make his passage more terrible; how much more then must the horror of the sinners own conscience under the apprehensions of that hell whither it's going, amaze, and affright him? There is a great difference between a wives parting with her husband, when called from her to live at Court under the shine of his Princes favour, whose return after a while she expects with an accumulation of wealth and honour: and another whose husband is taken out of her arms to be drag'd to prison and torment.

Is this thy case (miserable man) and art thou cutting thy short life out into chips, and spending thy little time upon trifles, when the salvation of thy soul is yet to be wrought out? Art thou tricking and trimming thy slimy carcass, while thy soul is dropping into hell? What is this? but to be painting the door, when the house is on fire; for a man to be curious about trimming his face, when he is not sure his head shall stand a day on his shoulders. It was an unreasonable time for *Belshazzar* to be feasting and quaffing, when his Kingdom lay at stake, and an enemy at the gates. It would have become a wise Prince to have been rather fighting on the Wall, than feasting in his Palace, and fattening himself for his own slaughter, which soon befel him, *Dan. 5. 30.* And it would become thee better to call upon thy God (poor sinner) and lye in tears for thy sins at his foot, if yet happily thy pardon may be obtain'd, than by wallowing in thy sensual pleasures, to stupify thy conscience, and lay it asleep, by which thou canst only gain a little ease from the troublesome thoughts of thy approaching misery.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Consider: 'tis possible (I do not mean in the way thou art in; for so it is as impossible that thou shouldst get Heaven, as it is that God should be found a lyer;) but 'tis possible that thou who art now without hope, mayst by a timely and vigorous use of the means obtain an hope of salvation; and certainly a possible hope carries in it a force of a strong Argument to endeavour for an actual hope. There is never a Devil in Hell so bad, but if he had a thousand Worlds at his dispose (and every one better than this, we so doat on) would exchange them all for such a May-be, yea count it a cheap penny-worth too. It was but a possibility which brought that *Heathen King* of *Nineveh* from his Throne to lie groveling at Gods foot in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and that King will rise up in judgement against thee, if thou dost not more; for that was a possibility more remote, than thine is; it was spell'd out not from any express promise that dropt from the Preacher to encourage them to humble themselves, and turn to the Lord; for we read of nothing but desolation denounc'd, but from that natural

Theology which was imprinted on their minds: This taught them to hope, that he who is the chief good, would not be implacable: But you have many express promises from Gods faithful lip, that if you in his time and way seek unto him, as sure as God is now in Heaven, you shall live there with him in glory, *Their souls shall live that seek the Lord, Psal. 69. 32.* Yea there are Millions of blessed ones now in Heaven experimenting the truth of this word, who once had no more right to Heaven, than your selves now have; and that blissful place is not yet crouded so full, but he can and will make room for you, if you have indeed a mind to go thither. There is one prayer which Christ made on earth, that will keep Heaven-gate open for all that believe on him unto the end of the world, *John 17. 20. Neither pray I for these, but for all those that shall believe on me through their word.* This is good news indeed: Me thinks it should make your souls leap within your breasts, while you sit under the invitations of the Gospel, as the babe once did in *Elizabeths* womb, upon the *Virgin Mariess* salutation. Say not then Sinners, that Ministers put you upon impossibilities, and bid you climb a Hill inaccessible, or assault a City that is unconquerable: No, 'tis the Devil, and thy own unbelieving heart, who together conspire thy ruine, that tell thee so. And as long as you listen to these Counsellors, you are like to do well, are you not? Well, whatever they say, know sinner, that if at last thou missest Heaven (which God forbid) the Lord can wash his hands over your head, and clear himself of your blood: thy damnation will be laid at thine own door; it will then appear there was no cheat in the promise, no Sophistry in the offer of the Gospel. What God did tender, he was willing to give, but thou didst voluntarily put eternal life from thee, and thy heart, whatever thy lying lips uttered to the contrary, did not like the terms; *My people would have none of me, Psal. 31. 11.* So that when the Jury shall go on thy murdered soul, to enquire how thou camest to thy miserable end, thou wilt be found guilty of thy own damnation, *Nemo amatis Deum, nisi qui dimittit eum.* None loseth God, but he that is willing to part with him.

Now thirdly, Consider the horrid cruelty of this act, for thee, by thy incorrigible and impenitent heart, to pull down eternal destruction on thy own head. O what a sad Epitaph is this to be found on a mans Grave-stone! Here lyes one that cut his own Throat, that unnaturally made away himself! this the man, that the woman, who would not be reclaim'd! They saw Hell before them, and yet would leap into it, notwithstanding the entreaties of Christ by his Spirit and Ministers to the contrary! And the oftner thou hast attempted to do it, and God hath been staying thy hand by his gracious solicitations, the greater will be thy shame and confusion before God, Men, and Angels, at the last day. God hath set a brand upon those acts of cruelty, which a man commits upon himself, above all other. It would speak a man of a harsh curriish nature, that could see his Horse in his Stable, or Hog in his Styte starve, when he hath meat to lay before him; more cruel to hear his servant roar and cry for bread, and deny it;

it; yet more horrid if this were done to a child or wife; but of all (because Nature crys loudest for self-preservation) the greatest violence that can possibly be done to the Law of Nature, is to forget the duty we owe to our own life. Oh what is it then for a sinner to starve his soul by rejecting Christ the Bread of Life, and to let out his souls blood at this wide Sluce! This is matchless cruelty! Indeed that which makes the self-murder of the body so great a crime, is, because it doth so eminently (I will not say unavoidably) hazard the destruction of the soul. Oh how unworthy then art thou to have so noble a guest as thy soul dwell in thy bosome, who preparest no better lodgings than Hell for it in another World! That soul whose nature makes it capable of being prefer'd to the blisful presence of God in heavens glory, if thou hadst not bolted the door against thy self by thy impenitency. But alas, this which is the worse murder is most common; They are but a few Monsters, that we now and then hear of, who lay violent hands upon their bodies, at the report of which the whole Countrey trembles; but you can hardly go into any house one day of the week, in which you shall not find some attempting to make away their souls; yea, that carry the very Knife and Halters in their bosomes, (their beloved sins I mean) with which they stab and strangle them; even those that are full of natural affections to their bodies, so as to be willing to spend all that they are worth, with her in the Gospel, on Physicians,

when the life of it is in danger; yet are so cruel to their dying damning souls, that they turn Christ their Phylician out of doors, who comes to cure them on free cost. In a word, those that discover abundance of wisdom and discretion in ordering their Worldly affairs, you would wonder how rational they are, what an account they will give why they do this, and why that; when it comes to the business of Heaven, and the Salvation of their souls, they are not like the same men: So that were you to judge them only by their actings herein, you could not believe them to be men; and is it not sad, that the soul which furnisheth you with reason for the dispatch of your worldly business, should have no benefit it self, from that very reason which it lends you to do all your other business with! This, as one well saith, is as if the Master of the House, who provides food for all his servants, should be himself kept by them from eating; and so remain the only starved creature in the House. And is not this the sad judgement and plague of God, that is visibly seen upon many, and those that go for wise men too *stilo mundi*? Are not their souls which give them understanding, to provide for back and belly, house and family, themselves starving in the mean time? being kept by the power of some lust from making use of their understanding and reason so far, as to put them upon any serious and vigorous endeavour for the salvation of them.

EPHES. 6. 17. *And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

Here we have the sixth and last Piece in the Christians *Panoply* brought to our hand. A *Sword*, and that of the right make, *The Sword of the Spirit*. The *Sword* was ever esteemed a most necessary part of the Souldiers Furniture, and therefore hath obtain'd a more general use in all Ages, and among all Nations, than any other weapon. Most Nations have some particular Weapons or Arms proper to themselves; But few or none come into the Field without a *Sword*. A *Pilot* without his *Chard*, a *Scholar* without his *Book*, and a *Souldier* without his *Sword*, are alike ridiculous. But above all these,

absurd is it for one to think of being a Christian, without knowledge of the Word of God, and some skill to use this Weapon. The usual name in Scripture for War, is the *Sword*; Jer. 25. 29. *I will call for a Sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, i. e. I will send War.* And this because the *Sword* is the Weapon of most universal use in War, and also that whereby the greatest execution is done in the Battel. Now such a Weapon is the *Word of God* in the Christians hand. By the edge of this his enemies fall, and his great exploits are done, Rev. 12. 11. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.*

CHAP. I.

Two notes observed in general from the words, and briefly toucht upon.

First, There are two Observables we may take notice of, before we fall to the closer discussion of the words. The first from the kind or sort of Arms that is here presented for the Christians use. The other from the place and order it stands in.

First, From the kind or sort of Arms here ap-

pointed for the Christians use, A weapon that is both defensive and offensive, such is the *Sword*. All the rest in the Apostles Armory are set out by defensive Arms, *Girdle*, *Breast-plate*, *Shield* and *Helmet*. Such as are of use to defend and save the Souldier from his enemies stroke. But the *Sword* doth both defend

defend him, and serves to wound his enemy also. Of like use is the Word of God to the Christian. First, It is for Defence; easily might the Souldier be disarm'd of all his other furniture, how glistering and glorious soever, had he not a Sword in his hand to lift up against his enemies assaults. And with as little ado would the Christian be stript of all his graces, had he not this Sword to defend them and himself too from Satans fury, *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction, Psal. 119.92.* This is like the flaming Sword with which God kept Adam out of Paradise. The Saint is oft compared to Christs Garden and Orchard: With the Sword of the Word he keeps this his Orchard from robbing. There would not long hang any of their sweet fruit (either graces or comforts) upon their souls, were not this great Robber, Satan, kept off with the point of this Sword. O this Word of God is a terrour to him, he cannot for his life overcome the dread of it. Let Christ say but, *It is written,* and the foul Fiend runs away with more confusion and terrour, than Caligula at a crack of Thunder. And that which was of such force coming from Christs blessed lips to drive him away, the Saints have always found this most successful instrument to defend them against his fiercest and most impetuous temptations. Ask David what was the Weapon with which he ward off the blows this enemy made at him, and he will tell you, it was the Word of God, *Psal. 17.4. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.* That is, by the help of thy Word I have been enabled to preserve my self from those wicked works and outrageous practises, to which others, for want of this weapon to defend them, have been hurried. Again, The Sword as it defends the Souldier, so it offends his enemy. Thus the Word of God is, as a keeping, so a killing Sword. It doth not only keep and restrain him from yielding to the force of temptations without, but also by it he kills and mortifies his lusts within, and this makes the victory complete. A man may scape his enemy one day, and be overcome by him at another time: We read of some that for a while escaped the pollutions of the world, yet because their lusts were never put to the Sword, and mortified in them by the power of the Word applied to their hearts, were at last themselves overcome and slain, by this secret enemy that lay skulking within their bowels, *2 Pet. 2.26.* compared with *vers. 22.* Absalom, notwithstanding his being hang'd by the hair of his head, might have lived to have taken revenge afterwards, on them by whom he was then beaten, had not Joab come in timely, and sped him, by sending his Darts with a message of Death to his heart. We have daily sad experiences of many that wriggle themselves out of their troubles of conscience (by which for a time they are restrained, and their sins, as it were, held by the last) to rush afterwards into more abominable courses than they did before; and all for want of skill to use, or courage and faithfulness, to thrust this Sword by faith to the heart of their lusts.

Secondly, Observe the order and place wherein

this piece of Armour stands. The Apostle first gives the Christian all the former pieces, and when these are put on, he then girds this Sword about him. The Spirit of God in holy Writ (I confess) is not always curious to observe method, yet methinks it should not be unpardonable if I venture to give a hint of a double significancy in the very place and order that it stands in. First, it may be brought in after all the rest, to let us know how necessary the graces of Gods Spirit are to our right using of the Word. Nothing more abused than the Word; and why? but because men come to it with unsound and unsanctified hearts. The Heretick quotes it to prove his false Doctrine, and dares be so impudent as to cite it to appear for him. But how is it possible they should father their monstrous births on the pure, chaste Word of God? Surely it is because they come to the Word, and converse with it, but bring not the Girdle of sincerity with them, and being ungirt, are unblest; God leaves them justly to mis of Truth, because they are not sincere in their enquiry after it. The Brat is got upon their own hearts by the father of Lies, and they come to the Word only to stand as witness to it. Another reads the Word, and is worse after it, more hardned in his lusts, than he was before. He sees some there Canonized for Saints, by the Spirit of God, the History of whose lives is notwithstanding blotted with some foul falls, possibly into those very sins in which he lies wallowing, and therefore is bold to put himself into the Saints Calendar. And why so impudent to do this? Truly, because he comes to the Word with an unholy heart, and wants the Breast-plate of Righteousness to defend him from the dint of so dangerous a temptation. Another, for want of faith to give existence to the truth of the threatening in his conscience, runs boldly upon the point of this Sword, and dares the God of heaven to strike him with it: Thus we find those wretches, mentioned by the Prophet, playing with this edge-tool, *Where is the Word of the Lord? let it come now, Jer. 17. 15.* As if they had said mockingly, Thou scarest us with strange Bug-bears, judgements that in the Name of God thou threatnest, are coming on us: when will they come? we would fain see them. Is Gods Sword rusty, that he is so long getting it out of the Scabbard? And the despairing soul, for want of a Helmet of Hope, deals little better with the Promise, than the presumptuous sinner with the Threatning. Instead of lifting it up to defend himself against the fears of his guilty conscience, he falls upon the point of it, and destroys his own soul with that Weapon which is given him to slay his enemy with. Well therefore may the Apostle first put on the other pieces, and then deliver this Sword to them to use for their good. A Sword in a mad mans hand, and the Word of God in some wicked mans mouth, are used much alike, to hurt only themselves and their best Friends with. Secondly, It may be commended after all the rest, to let us know, the Christian when advanced to the highest attainments of grace possible in this life, is not above the use of the Word, nay cannot be safe without it. When girded with Sincerity, his Plate of Righteousness on his breast, Shield of Faith in his hand,

hand, and Helmet of Hope covering his head, that his salvation is out of doubt to him at present, yet even then he must take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This is not a book to be read by the lowest form in Christs School only, but be- seeming the highest Scholar that seems most fit for a remove to Heavens Academy. It is not only of use to make a Christian by conversion, but to make him perfect also, 2 Tim. 3. 15. It is like the Architects rule and line, as necessary to lay the top-stone of the building at the end of his life, as the foundation at his conversion. They therefore are like to prove foolish builders, that throw away their line before the house be finished.

I come now to take up the Weapon laid before us in the Text, *And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* In which words observe these three parts.

First, The Weapon it self, i. e. The Word of God. Secondly, The Metaphor in which it is sheathed, The Sword, with the person whose it is, The Sword of the Spirit.

Thirdly, An exhortation, to make use of this Wea- pon, And the Sword, &c. That is, take this with all the other before-named pieces. So that to whom he directs the former pieces, to these he gives the Sword of the Word to use. Now those you shall find, are persons of all ranks and relations, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, he would have none be without this Sword any more than without the Girdle, Helmet, and the rest, &c. Though this I know will not please the Papists, who would have this Sword of the Word, like that of So- liah, laid up out of their reach, and that in the Priests keeping also.

CHAP. II.

what is here meant by the word of God.

I Begin with the Weapon it self, *The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* I shall first hold forth the Sword naked, and then put it again into its sheath, to handle it under the Metaphor of a Sword. There is a twofold Word of God. First, A substan- tial, or subsisting Word, and that is the eternal Son of God, John 1. 1. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Rev. 19. 13. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.* This is spoken of a Person, and he no other than Christ the Son of God. But he is not the Word of God in the Text. The Spirit is rather Christs Sword, than Christ the Sword of the Spirit: In the 15. verse of the fore-named Chapter, *One of his mouth goeth a sharp Sword, that with it he should smite the Nations.* Secondly, There is a declarative Word of God, and this is manifold according to the divers ways and manners, whereby the Lord hath been pleased to declare his mind to the Sons of men. At first, while the Earth was thin sown with People, and the Age of man so voluminous as to contain ma- ny centuries of years, God delivered his mind by Dreams and Visions, with such like immediate Re- velations unto faithful Witnesses, who might instruct others of their present generation therein, and trans- mit the knowledge of the same to after Ages; They li- ving so long, That three holy men were able, from the death of Adam, to preserve the purity of Reli- gion by certain tradition, till within a few years of the Israelites going down to Egypt. For as a Reverend and Learned pen calculates the Chronology: Methu- selah lived above two hundred years with Adam, and from him might receive the Will of God revealed to him. Sem lived almost an hundred years with Me- thuselah, and Sem was alive to the fiftieth year of Noah's Age, who died but a few years before Israels going into Egypt. Thus long God did forbear to commit his Will to Writing, because it passing through so few, and those trusty hands, it might safely be preserved.

But when the age of mans life was so contracted, that from eight and nine hundred years (the then or- dinary duration of it) it shrank into but so many tens, as it was in Moses his time, Psal. 90. And when the people of God grew from a few persons to a multi- tude in Egypt, and those corrupted with Idolatry: God now intending at their deliverance thence, to form them into a Polity and Common-wealth, thought it fit (for the preventing of corruption in his worship, and degeneracy in their lives) that they should have a written Law to be as a publick Standard to direct them in both. And accordingly he wrote the Ten Commandments with his own finger on Tables of stone. And commanded Moses to write the other words he heard from him on the Mount, Exod. 34. 27. yet so, that he still continued to signifie his Will by extraordinary Revelations to his Church, and also to enlarge this first Edition of his written Word ac- cording to the necessity of the times; reserving the Canon of Sacred Writ to be finished by Christ the great Doctor of the Church, who compleated the same, and by the Apostles his Publick Notaries, con- signed it to the use of his Church to the end of the world; yea, a curse from Christs mouth cleaves to him that shall add to, or take from the same, Rev. 22. 18, 19. So that now, all those ways whereby God directly made known his mind to his people, are re- solved into this one of the Scriptures, which we are to receive as the undoubted Word of God, contain- ing in it a perfect rule of Faith and Life, and to expect no other Revelation of his mind to us: Which is the meaning of Heb. 1. 1. *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son.* Therefore called the last days, because that we are to look for no other Revelation of Gods will. And therefore for ever let us abhor that blasphemy of Joachin, Abbas, Wigilians, and others that have fallen into the same phrensie with them, who dream of a three-

a three-fold Doctrine flowing from the three persons of the Sacred Trinity. The Law from the Father, the Gospel from the Son, which we have in the New Testament, and a Third from the Spirit, which they call *Evangelium aeternum*; whereas the Spirit of God

himself, by whom the Scriptures were indited, calls the Doctrine in it, *The Everlasting Gospel*, Rev. 14. 6. Thus much to shew what is here meant by the Word of God. From whence the Doctrine follows.

CHAP. III.

The Divinity of the Scripture shewn, and the sufficiency of its own Testimony to prove the same.

Doct. **T**hat the Holy Scriptures are the undoubted Word of God. By the Scriptures I mean the Old and New Testament contained in the Bible; both which are that one foundation whereupon our faith is built, Ephes. 2. 21. Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. That is the Doctrine which God by them hath delivered unto his Church; for they were under the unerring guidance of the Spirit, 2 Tim. 3. 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. *ὁμοῦνος*, breathed by God, it came as truly and immediately from the very mind and heart of God, as our breath doth from within our bodies; yea, both matter and words were ended by God, for the things which they spake, were not in the words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. 2. 12. God did not give them a Theam to dilate and enlarge upon, with their own parts and abilities; but confined them to what he ended. They were but his *Amantes* to write his infallible Dictate; or as so many Scribes, to transcribe what the Spirit of God laid before them. This is given as the Reason why no Scripture is to be fenced by our private fancy or conceit; but we are to take the meaning of it from it self, as we find one place clears another; because it came not from the private spirit of any man at first; but holy men spake as they were moved (or carried) by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1. 20, and 21. verses compared: now *eisdem est condere & interpretari*, the power that makes the Law, that must expound it.

Quest. But it may be some will say, do you bring Scripture to bear witness for its self? The question is, Whether the Scripture be the Word of God? and you tell us the Scripture saith so, and is that enough?

Ans. This would carry weight, if it were the word of some sorry Creature that stood upon the trial; but a greater than man is here: *Humana dicta Argumentis ac Testibus egent: Dei autem sermo ipse sibi testis est, quia necesse est quicquid incorrupta veritas loquitur, incorruptam se veritatis testimonium*: So Salomon, De Gub. Dei lib. 3. Men need Arguments and Witnesses to prove and vouch what they say to be true; but the Word of God is a sufficient witness to it self, because what truth it self (which is pure) saith, can be no other than a sincere and true testimony. Christ, who thought it derogatory to the Dignity of his Person, to borrow credit from mans testimony, did yet refer Himself to the report that the Scripture made of Him; and was willing to stand or fall in the opinion of his very enemies, as the testimony thereof should be found concerning him, John 5. ver. 34. compared with ver. 39. And therefore

their testimony may well pass for themselves. He that cannot see this Sun by its own light, may in vain think to go find it with Candle and Lanthorn of humane Testimony and Argument; not that these are wanting, or useless. The Testimony of the Church is highly to be revered, because to it are these Oracles of God delivered, to be kept as a sacred depositum and charge; yea, it is called the pillar and ground of truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15. and the Candlestick, Rev. 1. 12. from whence the light of the Scriptures shines forth into the World; but who will say, that the Proclamation of a Prince hath its authentickness from the Pillar it hangs on in the Market Cross? or that the Candle hath its light from the Candlestick it stands on? The Office of the Church is Ministerial, to publish and make known the Word of God; but not Magisterial and absolute, to make it Scripture, or unmake it, as she is pleased to allow or deny her stamp. This were to send God to man for his hand and seal; and to do by the Scriptures, as Tertullian saith in his *Apology* the Heathens did with their gods, who were to pass the Senate, and gain their good-will before they might be esteemed Deities by the People. And does not the Church of Rome thus by the Scriptures? sending us to the Pope for leave to believe Scripture to be Scripture! The blasphemous speech of Hermanus is notoriously known, who said, That the Scriptures did *Tantum valere, quantum Aesopi Fabula, nisi accedat Ecclesiae Testimonium*. O how like is Rome to Rome! Superstitious Rome, to Pagan Rome! But we need not travel so far to be determin'd in this case; the Scripture it self will save us the pains of this wearisome journey to so little purpose, being more able to satisfy us of its own Divine extraction, than the Pope, sitting in his Porphyry Chair with all his Cardinals about him. Neither is there any necessity to ask for a Messenger to ascend on High, who may from Heaven bring down their Letters testimonial unto us; seeing they bear Heavens Superscription so fairly writ upon their own Forehead, that denies them to proceed from any but God himself. May a particular man be known from a thousand others by his face, voice, or hand-writing? Certainly then it cannot seem strange that the God of Heaven should be discerned from his sorry Creature, by his voice and writing in the sacred Scriptures. Do we not see that he hath interwoven his glorious name so in the works of Creation, that they speak His Power and Goodness, and call Him Maker in their thoughts, who never read the Bible, or heard of such a Book? (so that they could not steal the notion thence, but had it from the dictate of their own

own consciences, extorting the acknowledgement of a Deity.) And much more will an enlightned conscience and sanctified heart be commanded by the over-powering evidence that shines forth in the Scriptures to fall down and cry, It is the voice of God, and not any Creature that speaks in them. Indeed the grand truths and chief notions found in the Scriptures, are so connatural to the principles of grace, which the same holy Spirit (who is the inditer of them) hath planted in the hearts of all the Saints, that their souls even spring and leap at the reading and hearing of them, as the Babe did in Elizabeths womb, at the Salutation of the Virgin Mary. The Lamb doth not more certainly know its Dam in the midst of a whole Flock (at whose bleating it passeth by them all to come to be suckled by her) than the Sheep of Christ know his voice in the saving truths of the Scriptures; the sincere Milk whereof they desire, and are taught of God to taste and differ from all other. Indeed till a soul be thus enlightned and wrought upon by the Spirit of God, he may have his mouth stopp'd by such Arguments for the Divinity of them, as he cannot answer; but he will never be perswaded to rest on them, and cordially embrace them, as the word of God; as we see in the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who oft were non-plust, and knock'd down speechless by the dint of Christs words; yea those wretches sent to attach the Person of Christ, rose up from the Earth (where the Majesty of Christs Deity looking out upon them, had thrown them grovelling) to lay violent hands on Him; so those obdurate *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, after all their cavillations, returned to oppose the Doctrine He preached and that molt of them unto death. Yea, that part of the Scripture which they seemed to cry so highly, the Law of Moses, and made the ground of their quarrel against Christ, our Saviour is

bold to tell them, That as great admirers as they were thereof, they did not so much as believe it to be the Word of God: How could they indeed have a true Divine Faith on it, who wanted the Spirit of God that alone works it? *Joh. 5. 46. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.* Erasmus tells his friend in a Letter, That he met with many things charg'd on Luther by the Monks for Heresies, which in Augustine pass'd among them for sound truths; but certainly they did not really believe them to be truths in Augustine; which they condemn'd in Luther: Neither did the *Pharisees* in truth believe what Moses wrote, because they oppos'd Christ, who did but verifie what Moses before from Gods mouth had spoke; but because when the Spirit of God comes to raise the heart to a belief of the Word of God, He doth it by putting his own weight and force to those Arguments which are couched in the Word, and so doth *sigillare animum charactere illorum*, leave the print or character of them sealed upon the soul; therefore I shall draw out an Argument or two among many; that are to be found in the Scripture it self, proving the parentage thereof to be Divine. I know it is a beaten path I am now walking in, and I shall rather speak *admodum* than *admodum*, the same things for substance which you may meet in many others, only a little otherwise shaped on my private Forge. For my own part, I think it more wisdom to borrow a Sword of proved metal at anothers hands, than to go with a weak leaden one of my own into the Field, and so come home well-beaten for my folly and pride.

The two general Heads from which I deduce my Demonstrations, are these: *First*, The matter of the Scriptures. *Secondly*, The supernatural Effects produced by them.

CHAP. IV.

An Argument for the Divinity of the Holy Scripture, drawn from its Antiquity, and also the sincerity of the Pen-men thereof.

First, The very matter contained in the Holy Scriptures demonstrate their heavenly descent; it being such as cannot be the birth or product of a Creature. Let us search the Scriptures a little, and consider the several parts thereof, and see whether they do not all bear the image of God upon them. Consider the Historical, Prophetical, Doctrinal, and Preceptive, with its Appendices of Promises and Threatnings to enforce the same; and see if a print of a Deity be not stamp'd upon them all.

First, The Historical part; in which let us consider, First, the Antiquity of the matter related: Secondly, the simplicity and sincerity of the Pen-men in relating what concerns themselves.

First, For the Antiquity of the matter related. There are some pieces that could not possibly drop from a Creatures pen; where should or could he have his reading and learning to enable him to write the History of the Creation? The *Heathen* (it is con-

fess'd) by the enquiry of natural Reason, have made a discovery thus far, that the World had a beginning, and could not be from Eternity; and that it could be the workmanship of none but God; But what is this to the compiling of a distinct History, how God went to work in the production thereof, what order every Creature was made in, and how long God was finishing the same? He that is furnish'd for such an enterprize, must be one that was pre-existent to the whole world, and an Eye-witness to every days work; which, man that was made the last day cannot pretend unto. And yet there is History more Ancient than this in the Scripture, where we find what was done at the Council-Table of Heaven, before the world began, and what pass'd there in favour of man, whom afterwards he would make. Who could search the Court-Rolls I wonder, and bring us intelligence of the everlasting Decrees then resolv'd on, and Promises made by the Father to the

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Son

Divinity of the Bible

Son of Eternal Life in time to be conferred on his Elect? *Tit. 1. 2.*

Secondly, The simplicity and sincerity of Holy *Pen-men*, in relating what most concerns themselves, and those that were near and dear to them. We may possibly find among *Humane Authors*, some that carry their pen with an even hand in writing the History of others, the making known whose faults casts no dishonourable reflection upon him that Records them: Thus *Suetonius* spared not to tell the World how wicked great *Emperours* were; who therefore is said, To have taken the same liberty in writing their Lives, that they took in leading them. But, where is the man that hath not an hair upon his pen, when he comes to write the blemishes of his own House or Person? Alas, here we find that their pen will cast no ink; they can rather make a blot in their *History*, than leave a blot on their own name; they have, like *Alexanders Painter*, a finger to lay upon these scars; or if they mention them, you shall observe they learn their pen on a sudden to write smaller than it was wont. But in the *History* of the *Scripture*, none of this self-love is to be found; the *Pen-men* whereof are as free to expose their own shame and nakedness to the worlds view, as any others. Thus *Moses* brands his own *Tribe* for their bloody murder on *Sechem*, *Gen. 34.* An enemy could not have set the brand heavier on their name than himself doth it; his own brother is not favoured by him, but his Idolatry set upon the File, *Exod. 32.* The proud behaviour of his dear Sister, and the plague of God which befell her, escapes not his pen, *Numb. 12.* No, not the incest of his own Parents, *Exod. 6. 20.* So that we must say of him, concerning the impartiality of his pen in writing, what himself saith of *Levi* in the execution of justice, *That he said unto his father, and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his Brethren, Deut. 33. 9.* In a word, to dispatch this particular, he is no more tender of his own personal honour, than he is of his House and Family; but doth Record the infirmities and miscarriages of his own life, as his backwardness to enter upon that difficult charge, *Exod. 3. and 4. Chapters.* Wherein he discovered so much unbelief and pusilla-

nimity of spirit, notwithstanding his clear and immediate call thereunto by God himself. His neglect of a Divine Ordinance in not circumcising his Child, and what that sin had like to cost him; his forwardness and impatience in murmuring at the troubles that accompanied his place wherein God had set him, *Numb. 11. ver. 11, 12, 13.* And his unbelief, after so many miraculous seals from Heaven set to the promise of God, for which he had his Leading-staff taken from him, and the honour of conducting *Israel* into *Canaan* denied him; a sore and heavy expression of Gods displeasure against him; *Numb. 20. 12.* Certainly we must confess, had not his pen been guided by a spirit more than humane, he could never have so perfectly conquered all carnal affections, so as not the least to favour himself in reporting things thus prejudicial to his honour in the world: And the same spirit is found to breath in the *Evangelists* History of the *Gospel*, they being as little dainty of their own names, as *Moses* was; as may be observed in their freedom to declare their own blemishes, and their Fellow-*Apostles*; so far were they from wronging the *Church* with a lame mutilated story of Christs life and death, to save their own credit; that they interweave the weaknesses and sins of one another all along their Relations. Hence we read of the sinful passion and revenge working in the sons of *Zebedee*; *Peter* acting the Devils part to tempt his Master at another time. The ignorance of all the *twelve* in some main principles of Christianity for a while, their ambition who should be greatest, and wrangling about it: their unbelief, and cowardize; one denying his Lord, and the rest flying their Colours, when they should have interposed their own bodies betwixt their Master and the danger, as resolved either to dye for him, or at least with him, and not save their lives with so dishonourable a flight; these, and such like passages declare them to be acted in their writings by a spirit higher than their own, and that no other than of God himself; for whom they so willingly debase themselves in the eyes of the World, and lay their names in the dust, that the glory of his Name might be exalted in this their free acknowledgment.

[C H A P. V.

The Divinity of the Scriptures demonstrated from the Prophetick part in it.

Prophecy.

Secondly, The Prophetick part of the *Scripture*, which contains wonderful predictions of such things to come, as could drop from no pen, but one guided by a Divine Hand, all which have had their punctual performance in the just periods fore-told. Indeed from whom could these come, but God? *Secret things belong to God, Deut. 29.* And predictions surely may pass very well for secrets; they are *arcana ejus imperii*; such secrets, that God offers to take him (whoever he is) and set him with himself in his own Throne, that is able to fore-tell things to come. *Isa. 41. 23.* Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods. This must

be confessed to be a flower of the Crown, and an incommunicable Property and Prerogative of the only true God, who stands upon the Hill of Eternity, and from thence hath the full prospect of all things, and to whose infinite understanding they are all present; for his will being the cause of all events, he must needs know them, because he knoweth that. The Devil indeed is very ambitious to be thought able to do this, and to gain the reputation hereof, hath had his mock-*Prophets* and *Prophecies* in all Ages: with which he hath abused the ignorant credulous World. But alas, his Predictions are no more true *Prophecies*, than his Miracles are true Miracles; he puts a cheat

cheat upon the understandings of silly souls in the one, as he doth on their senses in the other; for his predictions are either dark and dubious, cunningly pack'd and laid, that like a *Picture in plicis*, they carry two faces under one Hood; and in these Folds the subtil Serpent wrapt himself on purpose to save his credit, which way so ever the event fell out. And this got *Apollo* the name of *Loxias*, of *Λοξος*, *obliquus*; *propter obliqua & tortuosa responsa ejus*, because he mock'd them that consulted his Oracle with such ambiguous answers, that sent them as wife home, as they came to him. Indeed the Devil found it necessary thus to do, had he not with this patch of policy eeked out the scantness of his own understanding, the nakedness thereof would have been seen by every vulgar eye to his shame, and the contempt of his Oracles. Or if his Predictions were more plainly delivered, they were *first*, of such things, which he spell'd out by the help of Natures *Alphabet*, and came to the knowledge of, by diving into the secrets of natural causes, before they discovered themselves unto the observation of mans duller understanding; and this made them be cryed up for wonderful Predictions and supernatural, by those who could not see this clue in Satans hand that guided him. If a man should meet you in the street, and tell you such a friend of yours will dye within a few months, whom you left well to your thinking but a few minutes before, and the event should seal to the truth of what he said; you might possibly begin to think this a wonderful Prophecie; but when you afterwards know, he that told you this was a *Physician* rarely accomplisht, and had upon much study and strict observation of your friends bodily state, found a dangerous disease growing insensibly upon him; you would alter your opinion, and not think him a *Prophet*, but admire him for a skilful *Physician*. Thus, did we but consider the vastness of Satans natural parts (though limited because created) and the improvement he hath made of them, by the study and experience of so many thousand years, we should not count his Predictions for *Prophecies*, but rather as Comments and explications of the short and dark Text of natural causes, and acknowledge him a learned *Naturalist*; but not deserving the name of a true *Prophet*. Secondly, If he hath not his hint from Natural Causes, then he gathers his Inferences from Moral and Political Causes, which compared together by so deep a Pate as his, give him great help and advantage to infer many times what in very great probability, and all likelihood of Reason will come to pass. Thus what the Devil told *Saul* would become of him, his Army and Kingdom, was nothing but what he might rationally conclude from those premises which lay before him, in his being rejected of God, and another anointed by Gods own command to be *King* in his stead, together with the just height and full measure to which *Saul's* sins might now be thought to have arrived, (by his going to a Witch for counsel) and a puissant Army of the *Philistines* preparing against him, whose wonted courage now so failed him, that he went rather like a Malefactor pinion'd and bound with the terrours of his accusing Consci-

ence, to meet an Executioner that should give the fatal stroke to him, than like a valiant Captain to adorn and enrich himself with the spoils of his enemies: All these laid together, make it appear the Devil without a gift of *Prophecie* might tell him his doom. Thirdly and lastly, God may and doth sometimes reveal future events to Satan, as when God intends him to be his Instrument to execute some of his purposes, he may, and doth acquaint him with the same some time before; and you will not say the Hangman is a Prophet, that can tell such a man shall on such a day be beheaded or hang'd, when he hath a warrant from the King that appoints him to do that office. Thus Satan could have told *Job* before-hand what sad afflictions would certainly befall him in his estate, servants, children, and his own body; because God had granted him a Commission to be the Instrument that should bring all these upon him: But neither *Satan*, nor any Creature else are able of themselves to foretell such events, which neither arise from natural causes, nor may be rationally concluded to follow from Moral and Political probabilities; but are lockt up in the Cabinet of the Divine Will, how they shall fall out: And such are the *Prophecies* which we find in the Holy Scriptures, by which they plainly prove their heavenly extraction. They must needs come from God, that tell us what God only knew, and depended on his will to be disposed of. Who but God, could tell *Abraham* where his Posterity should be, and what should particularly befall them four hundred years after his death? for so long before was he acquainted with their deliverance out of *Egypt*, Gen. 15. which accordingly came to pass punctually on the very day foretold, *Exod.* 12. 41. How admirable are the Prophecies of *Christ* the *Messias*, in which his Person, Birth, Life and Death, even to the minute, and circumstances of them are as exactly and particularly set down, many ages before his coming upon the stage, as by the *Evangelists* themselves, who were upon the place with him, and saw all that was done with their own eyes; and though some things foretold of him may be thought, because small and inconsiderable in themselves, not to deserve a mention in so high and sacred a Prophecie, as our Saviours riding on an *Ass*, *Zech.* 9. 9. The thirty pieces given for him, and the purchase of the *Potters field* afterwards with them, *Zech.* 11. 12, 13. And the preserving his bones whole, when they that suffer'd with him had theirs broken: These I say and such like though they may seem inconsiderable passages in themselves, yet upon due weighing the end for which they are mentioned, we shall find that our weak faiths could not well have spared their help to strengthen it in the belief of the Prophecie. Indeed a great weight of the Argument to prove the truth and Divinity of the Prophecie, moves upon these little Hinges; because the less these are in themselves, the more admirably piercing and strong must that eye be, that could see such small things at so great a distance; none but an infinite understanding could do this! And now I hope none will dare to ask, But how may we be sure that such Prophecies were extant so long before their fulfilling, and not

foisted in, after these things were done? seeing they were upon publick Record in the Church of the Jews, and not denied by those that denied Christ himself. And truly this one consideration cast into the scale after all the former, doth give an over-weight to the Argument we are now upon. I mean, that these Prophecies were so long, and that so openly read and known, and consequently impossible, that Satan should be ignorant of them, and not take the Alarm from them, to do his utmost to impede their accomplishment, seeing his whole Kingdom

lay at stake, so as either he must hinder them, or they would ruine it; and that notwithstanding all this, together with his restless endeavour against them, they should be all so fairly delivered in their full time; yea many of them by the Midwifery of those very persons, that would, if possible, have destroyed them in the womb, as we see *Acts* 4. 27. Here breaks out the wisdom and power of a God with such a strong beam of light and evidence, that none of the Scriptures enemies can wishly look against it.

CHAP. VI.

The Divine extraction of the Scripture evident in its Doctrinal part.

Thirdly, the Doctrinal part of the Scriptures, by which in this place I mean only those grounds and principles of Faith that are laid down in Scripture and proposed to be believed and embraced of all that desire eternal life. There is a Divine glory that is to be seen on the very face of them, being so sublime, that no creature can be the inventor of them. To instance but in a few for all. First *God* himself, who is the prime object of our Faith. Who but *God* could tell us who and what his Nature is? That there is a *God*, we confess, is a Notion that natural reason hath found the way to search out, yea his *God-head* and *power* are a lesson taught in the School of Nature, and to be read in the book of the creatures; but how long men, who have no higher teaching, are learning the true knowledge of *God*, and how little progress they make therein, we see in the poor Heathen, among whom the wisest *Philosophers* have been such Dunces, groping about this one principle one age after another, and yet not able to find the door, as the *Apostle* tells us when he saith that, *the world by Wisdom knew not God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. But as for the *Trinity* of Persons in the *God-head*, this is such a height as the heart of man never could take aim at, so much as to dream or start a thought of it; so that if *God* had not revealed it, the world of necessity must have for ever continued in the ignorance thereof. And the same must be said of all Gospel-Truths, *Jesus Christ*,

God-man, *Justification* by faith in his blood, and the whole method of grace and salvation through him; They are all such Notions as never came into the hearts of the wisest *Sophies* in the world to conceive of; and therefore it is no wonder that a little *child* under the preaching of the Gospel, believes these mysteries which *Plato* and *Aristotle* were ignorant of, because they are not attain'd by our parts and industry, but communicated by Divine and supernatural Revelation: Yea, now they are revealed, how does our reason gaze at them, as Notions that are foreign, and meer strangers to its own natural conceptions, yea too big to be grasped and comprehended with its short span? which makes it so malepert (where grace is not Master to keep it in subjection) as to object against the possibility of their being true, because it self cannot measure them. As if the *Owl* should say the *Sun* had no light, because her weak eyes cannot bear to look on it. These are truths to be believed, upon the credit of him that relates them, and not to be entertain'd or rejected as they correspond to; or differ from the mould of our reason. He that will handle these with his reason, and not his faith, is like to be served as the *Smith* (it is *Chrysostomes* comparison) that takes up his red-hot Iron with his hand, and not with his tongs, what can he expect but to burn his fingers with them?

CHAP. VII.

The Divinity of the Scripture proved from its preceptive part.

Fourthly, The fourth and last part in our division of the Scripture, is, *The preceptive*, or that which contains commands and precepts. And this will be found to carry the superscription of its Divinity on its forehead, and that with as legible and fair Characters as any of the former. If we do but consider,

First, The vast extent of Scripture commands:

And

Secondly, Their spotless purity.

SECT. I.

First, The vast extent of Scripture commands; which is such as never any humane Laws, though of the greatest Monarch that ever swayed Scepter, could pretend unto. Where is the *Prince* among the sons of men, that ever went about to give Laws to all mankind, and did not rather, in his Royal Edicts and Laws, respect that particular *People*, and those *Nations*, whose lot fell within the circle of their Empire?

Of all the Empires the world ever had, the Roman was without compare the greatest; and yet when the Roman Eagles wings were best grown, they could not overpead more than the third part of this lower world: And how vain and ridiculous had it been for the Emperours to have attempted to make a Law for those Nations, which neither knew him, nor he them? But in the Scripture we find such Laws, as concern all mankind, wherever they live, and which have been promulged, where the Bible was never seen. Their sound is gone into all the Earth, and their words to the end of the world. Many of the Laws in Sacred Writ, they are but a second, and that fairer Edition of what was found written in the consciences of men and women before the Scripture came forth. So that if those Laws that are cut with so indeleble a Character in the consciences of all the sons of Adam, be of God, then the Scripture must be confessed to proceed from God also. Yet further, as the Scripture takes all mankind to task, and lays its bonds on all, high and low, rich and poor: So its Laws bind the whole man; the heart with its most inward thoughts is laid in these Chains, as well as the outward man. Indeed the Heart is the principal subject, whose loyalty is most provided for in the precepts of Scripture. Those commands that contain our duty to God, require that all be done with the heart and soul; if we pray, it must be in the spirit, *John 4.* or else we had as good do nothing; for we transgress the Law of Prayer: if it be a Law that respects our carriage to man, still the heart is chiefly intended, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, Levit. 19. Cursed be the King, no not in thy thought, Eccl. 10.*

And accordingly the promises and threatnings, which attend the commands of Scripture (as the Arteries do the Veins in mans body) to inspirit and enforce them, they are suitable to the spiritual nature of those commands; the rewards of the one, and punishments of the other, being such as respect the spiritual performance or neglect of them, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Mat. 5.* Not blessed are they whose hands are clean, though their hearts be foul and filthy. So, *Mal. 1. 14. Cursed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.* The deceiver there is the Hypocrite, that gives God the skin for the sacrifice, the shape of a duty for the substance, the lean of an outside obedience, instead of the fat of the outward man, viz. the obedience of the heart. And as the principal object that these are levelled to and against, is the obedience or disobedience of the Heart; so the subject or vessel into which the one emptyeth its blessings, and the other its curses, is chiefly the soul and spirit, *They shall praise the Lord that seek him, your hearts shall live forever, Psalm 22. 26. I will comfort you; and your heart shall rejoyce, Isa. 66. 13, 14. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse, O God, Lam. 3. 65.* Now I would fain know the Man that ever went about to form such Laws, as should bind the hearts of men, or prepare such rewards as should reach the souls and consciences of men. Truly, if any mortal man (be he the greatest of the Worlds Monarchs) should make a Law

that his Subjects should love him with all their hearts and souls, and not dare, upon peril of his greatest indignation, to bid a traiterous thought against his Royal Person welcome in their souls, but presently confess it to him, or else he would be avenged on him. He would deserve to be more laughed at for his pride and folly, than Xerxes for casting his Fetters into the Hellespont to chain the surly waves with them into his obedience; or Caligula that threatned the air if it durst rain when he was at his Pastimes, who yet, poor sneaks, durst not himself so much as look into the air when it Thundred. Certainly, a Bedlam would be fitter for such a Mad-man, more than a Kings Throne and Palace, that should so far forfeit his reason, as to think that the thoughts and hears of men were within his Territories and Jurisdiction. Who need fear such a Law, when none but the Offender himself can bring in evidence of the fact? There have been indeed some, that intending to take away the life of their Prince by a bloody murderous Knife, have been attached by their own conscience, and forced by it to blab and confess their own wicked thoughts, before any other could be their Accuser, so Sacred are the Persons of Gods anointed ones; But not from the power of Man or his Law, making them do so, but the dread of God arresting their conscience for violating his Law, which indeed not only binds up Subjects hands from killing, but hearts also from cursing Kings in our very thought. This, this is the Law which rules in the consciences of the worst of men; a bit that God rides the fiercest sinners with, and so curbs them, that they can never shake it out of their mouths. Enough to prove the Divinity thereof.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The spotless purity of Scripture-commands, do no less evince their divine extraction, *God is the Holy one, Isa. 43.* He alone is perfectly Holy; *The Heavens are not clean in his sight, Job 15. 15. He can charge the Angels themselves (who may be the Heavens in the fore-mentioned place) with folly, Job 4. 18.* because though they never sinned, yet they are finnable; 'tis possible they might sin, as some of their order have done, if not kept from it by confirming grace. And as God is the only holy Person, so the Scripture is the only holy Book: All besides this have their Errata, which are corrected by this; *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever, Psalm 19. 9.* That is, the Word of God is clean, called the fear of Isaac, because the object of his fear. The Word is clean, and mark, *endureth for ever*; that is, it ever continues, and shall be found so.

There are dregs and sediments that will appear in the holiest Writings of the best men, when they have stood a while under the observation of a critical eye; but the Scripture hath been exposed to the view and censure all sorts of men, yet could never have the least impurity charged justly upon it. It is so clean and pure, that it makes filthy souls clean, *Sanctifie them by thy Word, thy Word is Truth, John 17. 17.* That which is it self filthy, may make our cloaths and bodies clean, but that which makes our souls pure and clean must be it self without all defilement: And such is the

Scripture:

Scripture: Nothing there that gratifies the flesh, or affords fuel to any lust. No it puts every sin to the Sword, and strikes through the loyns of all sinners great or small, *Rom. 8. 6. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* So that as *Athenagoras* well said, *No man can be wicked that is a Christian, unless he be an hypocrite.* For the *Scripture* which he professeth to be his rule of Faith and Life, will not allow him to embrace any Doctrine that is false, or practice that is filthy and unholy. This is that which Christianity can alone glory in. The Heathen were led into many abominations by their very Religion, and gods whom they worshipp'd. No wonder they were so beastly and sensual in their lives, when they served drunken and filthy gods; and the very mysteries of their Religion were so horribly unclean, that they durst not let them be commonly known, as having a scent too strong and stinking to be endured by any that had not their senses quite stopt, and their foolish minds, by the judgement of God upon them, wholly darkened. But the Christian can charge none of his sins upon his God, who tempteth none to evil, but hateth perfectly both the work, and also worker of iniquity. Nor upon his Bible, which damns every sin to the pit of Hell, and all that live therein, *Rom. 2. 9. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: But glory, honour and peace to every man, that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* O who could be the Author of this blessed book, but the blessed God! If any creature made it, he was either a wicked creature, or one that was holy. First, No wicked creature could do it; neither Angel nor man. Surely they would never have taken so much pains to pull down their own Kingdom of darkness. (The great plot which runs through the Bible from one end of it to the other.) And if it were the birth of their brain, no doubt as every one loves his own child, so would they have shewn more love to it, than yet they have done. The im-

placable wrath that the Devil and his party of wicked ones in the world have shewn in all Ages to the Scriptures, declares sufficiently it never came from them. No, no, it cannot stand with the interest of unclean spirits or wicked men, to advance holiness in the world. The Devil, though bold enough, durst never be so impudent, as to lay claim to this holy, heavenly piece; but if he should, the glorious beauty of holiness that shines on the face of it, would forbid any man in his wits, to believe that black Fiend to be the Father of it. *Naturalissimum est opus omnis viventis generare sibi simile*, It is natural for every creature to beget his like; and what likeness there is betwixt light and darkness, is as easy to judge. Neither can any holy creature be the Author of it, be he Angel or man. Can we think that any having the least spark of love to God, or fear of his Majesty dwelling in their breast, durst counterfeit his dreadful Name by setting it to their work, and abuse the world with such a blasphemy and prodigious lye, as to say, *Thus saith the Lord*, and prefix his Name all along, when not God, but themselves are the Authors? Could this impudence and audacious wickedness proceed from any holy Angel or Man? doubtless it could not. Nay further, durst any holy creature put such a cheat upon the world, and then denounce the wrath and vengeance of God against those who shall speak in Gods Name, but were never sent of him as the Scripture mentions? Certainly, that earth which swallowed up *Corah* and his ungodly rout, for pretending to an authority from God as good as the *Priests*, to offer incense, would not have spared *Moses* himself, if he had spoke that in Gods Name which he had not from him, but was the invention of his own private brain. Thus we see no creature, good or bad, Angel or Man can be the Author of the Scripture, so that none remains but God to own it, which he hath done with Miracles enough to convince a very Atheist of their Divinity.

CHAP. VIII.

The Heart-searching Property of the Scriptures.

Scriptures

Secondly, The second Argument I shall chuse to demonstrate the divine extraction of the Scriptures, shall be taken from the supernatural effects they produce. Nothing can be the cause of an effect higher and greater than it self; if therefore we can find such effects to be the product of the Scriptures as are above the spear of any creatures activity, it will then be evident, that the Scripture it self is supernatural, not the word of a meer creature, but of God himself. What the *Psalmist* saith of *Thunder*, that loud voyce of Nature from the clouds, we may apply to the voyce of God speaking from heaven in the Scripture, *It is a mighty voyce, and full of Majesty; It breaketh the Cedars, Kings and Kingdoms, it divideth the flames of fire.* The holy Martyrs have, with one Bucket of this spiritual wa-

ter, quenched the scorching flames of that furious element into which their persecuting enemies have thrown them: *It shaketh the Wilderness* of the wild wicked world, making the stout hearts of the proudest sinners to tremble like the leaves of trees with the wind; and bringeth the pangs of the new birth upon them whose hearts before never quailed for the most prodigious crimes. *It discovereth the Forests*, and hunts sinners out of their Thickets and Refuges of lyes, whither they run to hide themselves from the Hue and Cry of divine vengeance. But to speak more particularly and distinctly, there are four powerful and strange effects, which the Word puts forth upon the hearts of men, all which will evince its divine original.

First, It is a heart-searching power, whereby it ransacks

ransacks and rifles the consciences of men: It looks into the most secret transactions of the heart, and tells us what we do in our Bed-Chamber. As *Elisha* did by the King of Syria, 2 Kings 6. 12. It cometh where no Princes Warrant can empower his Officer to search (I mean the heart.) We read that *Christ* came to his Disciples when the doors were shut, and stood in the midst of them, John 20. 19. Thus the Word (when all doors are shut, that men can have no intelligence what passeth within the breasts of men) comes in upon the sinner without asking him leave, and stands in the midst of his most secret plots and counsels, there presenting it self to his view, and saith to him as *Elisha* to *Ghazai*, *Went not my eye with thee, when thou didst this and that?* How often doth the sinner find his heart discovered, and laid out of all its folds by the Word preached, as if the Minister had stood at his window, and seen him what he did within doors, or some had come and told Tales of him to the preacher? Such I have known, that would not believe to the contrary, but that the Minister had been informed of their pranks, and so level'd his discourse particularly at their breasts, when he hath been as ignorant of their doings, as of theirs that live in *America*, and only shot his Reproofs, like him that smote *Abab*, who drew his bow at a venture, without taking aim at the person of any. From whence can this property come, but God, who claims it as his own incommunicable Attribute, Jer. 17. 10. *I the Lord search the heart.* God is in the Word, and therefore it findeth the way to get between the joints of the Harness, though sent at random out of mans bow. If any creature could have free ingress into this retiring room of the heart, the Devil being a spirit, and of such a piercing, prying eye, were the most likely to be he, yet even he is lockt out of this room, though indeed he can peep into the next. Now if God can only search the heart, then that Word which doth the same, can come from no other but God himself. Who indeed can make a Key to this Lock of the heart, but he that knoweth all the

Wards of it? Suppose you did lock up a summe of money in a Cabinet, and none but one in all the world besides your self were privy to the secret place where you lay this Key; if you then should find the Key taken away, and the Cabinet opened and rifled, you would soon conclude whose doing it was. Why thus when you find your heart disclosed, and the secret thoughts therein laid open unto you in the word, you may easily conclude, that God is in it, the Key that doth this, is of his making, who is the only one besides your selves that is privy to the counsels of your hearts, that seeth all the secret traverses of your inward man: Who but he can send a Spie so directly to your hiding place, where you have laid up your treasures of darknes out of the worlds sight? There are two secrets that the word discloseth.

First, What a mans own heart knoweth, and no creature besides: Thus *Christ* told the woman of *Samaritan*, what her Neighbours could not charge her with; from which she concluded him to be a Prophet, a man of God: And may we not conclude the Scripture to be the Word of God, that doth the same?

Secondly, Those things which a mans own heart is not privy to: God is said to be greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things, 1 John 3. 20. He knows more by us, than we by our selves: And doth not the Word dive to the bottom of the heart, and fetch up that filth thence, which the eye of the conscience never had the sight of before, nor ever could without the help of the Word? Rom. 7. 7. *I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* And if the Word findeth that out which escapeth the scrutiny of a mans own heart, doth it not prove a Deity to be in it? So argueth the Apostle, 1 Cor. 14. 25. speaking of the power the Word preached hath to lay open the heart, *Thus are the secrets (saith he) of his heart made manifest: And so falling down on his face, will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

CHAP. IX.

The property of the Word to awaken and terrifie the Conscience.

Secondly, The second effect the Scripture hath upon the spirits of men, by which its Divine pedigree may be proved, is the power it exerciseth on the conscience to convince and terrifie it: Conscience is a Castle that no batteries but what God raiseth against it, can shake; no power can command it to stoop, but that which heaven and Earth obey. He that disarms the strong man, must be stronger than he: He that masters the conscience, must be greater than it, and so God only is, 1 Job. 3. 12. Now the Word being able to shake and shatter this power of the soul, which disdaineth to stoop to any but God, must needs be from him: And that the Word exerts such a power upon the conscience, who will doubt? Do we not see it dayly chastising the proudest sinners, even to make them cry and whine under its con-

victions, like a child under the Rod? Yea doth it not slay them out-right, that they fall down dispirited at one Thunder-clap of the Law let off by God upon them? *When sin revived, I died*, saith *Paul*. He who before was a jolly man, as well provided in his own opinion for his spiritual estate, as *Job* was for his outward, when he had his Flocks and herds, Sons and Daughters, Health and Prosperity, all as yet untouched by the hand of God; but when the Law came to charge sin home upon him, it stript his conscience as naked as *Job* afterward was in his outward condition: The mans eyes are opened now to see how naked and void of all holiness he is, yea his fair skin of *Pharisaical* strictness, with the beauty of which he was formerly so far in love, as if he had been another *Abalom*, without mole or wart, he now judgeth it to be

be but odious deformity, and himself a most loathsome creature, by reason of those plague sores and ulcers, that he sees running on him. Yea, such power the Word had upon him, that it laid him trembling over the bottomless pit, in a despair of himself, and his own righteousness.

Hath any creature an arm like this of the word? or can any book penned by the wit of man, command the heart to tremble at the rehearsal thereof, as this can do? Even a *Felie* on the Bench, when a poor prisoner preacheth this Word at the Bar to him, is put into a shaking fit. Who but a God could make those Monsters of men, that had padled in the blood of Christ, and who scorn'd his Doctrine so as to count the Professours of it Fools and Idiots, yet come afrighted in their own thoughts, at a secret prick given them in *Peter's* Sermon; and cry out in the open Assembly, *Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?* Doth not this carry as visible print of a Deity, as when *Moses* clave the Rock with a little Rod in his hand?

Quest. But haply you will say, If there be such a conscience-shaking power in the Word, how comes it to pass, that many notorious sinners sit so peaceably and sleep so soundly under it? They read it at home, and hear it preach powerfully in the publick, yet are so far from feeling any such earth-quake in their consciences, that they remain senseless and stupid: yea, can laugh at the preacher for his pains, and shake off all the threatnings denounced, when Sermon is done, as easily as the Spaniel doth the water when he comes out of the River.

Ans. First I answer, many sinners who seem to joy in our eyes, have not such merry lives as you think for. A book may be fairly bound and gilded, yet have but sad stories writ within it: Sinners will not tell us all the secret rebukes that conscience from the word gives them. If you will judge of *Herod* by the jollity of his Feast, you may think he wanted no joy; but at another time we see that *John's* Ghost walked in his conscience: And so doth the Word haunt many a one, who to us appear to lay nothing to heart; in the midst of their laughter their heart is sad; you see the lightning in their face, but hear

not the Thunder that rumbles in their conscience.

Secondly, It is enough, that the Word doth leave such an impression upon the conscience of any (though not of all) to prove its Divinity; One Affirmative Testimony speaketh louder for the proof of a thing, than many Negatives do to the contrary. The Word is not a physical instrument, but moral, and works not by a vertue inherent in it, but power impressed on it by the Spirit of God that first indited it, and this power he putteth forth according to his own good pleasure; so that the same Word sets one man a trembling, and leaves another (in the same fear may be) as little moved by it as the Pillar he leaneth on. Thus as two at a Mill, so at a Sermon, one is taken, and the other left; one is humbled, and another hardened; not from any impotency in the Word, but freeness of Gods dispensing it: His message it shall do to whom it is sent, and none else. It is as a man strikes with a Sword, back or edge, a strong or weak blow, that makes it cut or not, gives a slight wound or deep. The word pierceth the conscience according to the force and divine power that is impressed on it. The three children walked in the fire, and were not singed, others were consumed as soon as they came within the scent of it. Shall we say, That fire is not hot, because one was burnt, and the other not? Some their consciences do not so much as smell of the Word, though the flames of the threatening lie about their ears, others are set all on fire with the terrors of it.

Thirdly, The senseless stupidity of some under the stroke of the word, is not to be imputed to its impotency, but to the just judgement of God, wherewith he plagueth them for sinning against the convictions thereof, for commonly they are of that sort, whose consciences are so impenetrable, the withering curse of God having light upon them, no wonder their judgements are darkned, and consciences seared. It was as great a manifestation of Christs power (and his Disciples judged it so) when with two or three words the Fig-tree was blasted, as if he had caused it to spring and sprout when withered and dry. The power of God is as great in hardning *Pharaoh's* heart, as in melting *Josiah's*.

CHAP. X.

The comforting property of the word to bleeding Consciences.

THirdly, Its power to comfort and raise a dejected spirit. Conscience is Gods prison in the Creatures own bosom, from whence none can have his release, except by his Warrant that made the *Mitimus*, and committed him thither. Indeed he is a weak Prince, that hath no prison to commit offenders into, but what another can break open. This where God layes sinners in Chains, is not such: A wounded spirit (saith *Solomon*) who can bear? Yea, and who can cure? If any Creature could, surely then the Devils were as able as any to do it: But we see they have not to this day found the way to shake off those Fetters which God keepeth them in; but lie

roaring under the unspeakable torment of Gods wrath, and they who cannot cure their own wounds, are like to be but poor Physicians to help others; indeed they acknowledge it beyond their skill and power: *Wherefore dost thou ask of me* (saith the Devil to *Saul*) *seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thy enemy?* 1 Sam. 28. 16. The distress of an afflicted conscience, ariseth from the dismal sense of divine wrath for sin; now none can remove this, but he that can infallibly assure the soul of Gods pardoning mercy; and this lies so deep in Gods heart, that God alone (who only knoweth his own thoughts) can be the Messenger to bring the News, and

and therefore the Word which doth this, can come from none but him; and that it is able not only to do this but also to fill the soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, is a truth so undoubted, that we need not ascend up to Heaven for further confirmation; that Spirit which first indited the Word, hath sealed it to the hearts of innumerable Believers. Indeed all the Saints acknowledge their comfort and peaceto be drawn out of these Wells of Salvation. *In the midst of my perplexed thoughts, thy comforts delight my soul, Psal. 149.* Nay, he doth not only tell us his own experience, whence he had his joy, but others also to have had theirs from the same Tap. *Psal. 107. 17. Fools because of Transgression are afflicted. And what then can ease them? Will all the Rarities that can be got by Sea or Land, make a diversion to their thoughts and ease them of their pain? No, for their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near to the Gates of death, ver. 18. What Cordial then have they left to use, or way to take for their relief? Truly none, but to betake themselves to prayers and tears, Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses, ver. 19. And with what Key doth God open their prison door? it follows ver. 20. He sent his Word, and healed them. If you shall say all this is meant of outward trouble; yet surely you must grant it holds more strong concerning that which is inward: What but a word from Gods mouth can heal a distressed spirit, when the body pineth and languisheth, till God speaketh a healing word unto it?*

Great and mighty things are spoken of thee, and done by thee O holy Word! Thou out-viest the Worlds joy, and makest the soul that hath but tasted thy strong consolations, presently to disrelish all sensual delights, as flashy & frothy; so pure and powerful is the light of that joy which thou kindlest in the Saints

bosom, that it quencheth all sinful carnal joy with its beams, as the Sun doth the fire on the Hearth. Thou conquerest the horror of death, that it is not feared. Thou vanquishest the pains thereof, that they are not felt. Thou treadest on Scorpions and Serpents, and they have no power to sting or hurt those that believe in thee: Devils know thee, and flee before thee, quitting at sight of thee, their holds, and leave those consciences which they had so long under their Power & Tyranny, for thee to enter with thy sweet consolations. Thou quenchest the flames of hell it self, and makest the soul that even now was thrown bound by despair into the Fiery furnace of Gods wrath, to walk comfortably and unsinged amidst the thoughts thereof. Thou bringest heaven down to Earth, and givest the believing soul a prospect of that heavenly Jerusalem, which is so far off, as if he were walking in the blessed streets thereof; yea, thou entertainest him with the same delicacies, which glorified Saints (though more fully) feed on, so that some times he forgetteth he is in the body, even when pains and torments are upon him. This have the Saints experimented, and more than my pen or their own tongue can expresse; so that we may say to him that yet questions whence the Scriptures came, as the blind man cured by Christ did to the Pharises, *John 9. 30. This is a marvellous thing (saith he) that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes:* So here, 'This is marvellous, yea ridiculous, to say we know not whence the Scripture is, when it can do all this; since the World began was it not heard, that the word of a meer Creature could remove Mountains of despairs, and fill the souls of poor sinners with such joy and peace, in spite of hell, and the creatures own unbelief, under the weight of which as a heavy grave-stone, he lay buried and sealed.

CHAP. XI.

The converting power of the word.

Fourthly, The work of Conversion, which none but God, (who is the God of all grace) can produce. When Johns Disciples came to Christ to be resolved who he was, whether the Messias or not, *Mat. 11. 4.* Christ neither tells them he was, or was not he; but sends them to take their answer from the marvellous works he did. *Go (saith he) and shew John again those things which you do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the Lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them, Evangelizati, are Gospelized:* That is, they are transformed into the very nature of the Gospel, and acted by the Spirit which breaths in the Gospel. By all which instances Christs drift was, to give an ocular Demonstration of their faith, that he, who did such miracles, could be no other than he whom they sought; and that, which brings up the Rear, is the converting power of the Word, not set last, because the least among them; but rather because it is the greatest

wonder of them all, and comprehends in it all the other; when souls are converted, the blind receive their sight; *you were darkness, but now light in the Lord.* The lame walk, in that the affections (the souls feet) are set at liberty, & receive strength to run the ways of God with delight. Lepers are cleansed, in that filthy lusts are cured, and foul souls are sanctified; and so of the rest. Now though the former miracles cease, yet this which is the greatest, still accompanying the Word, affords such a Demonstration for its Divinity, as Reason it self cannot oppose. Is it beyond the skill and strength of the mightiest Angel, to make the least pile of grass in the Field? much more the new Creature in the heart, the noblest of Gods works.

That therefore which doth thus new mould the heart, and make the Creature as unlike to his former self, as the Lamb is to the Wolf, and the Oxe to the Lyon; the one meek and harmless, the other fierce and ravenous; that must needs be from God; and such changes are the daily product of the Word. How

many have you known once under the power of their lusts, throwing like mad men their fire-brands about, pollut with so many Devils as sins, and hurried hither and thither by these furies; yet at the hearing of one Gospel Sermon, have you not seen them quite metamorphosed, and with him in the Gospel (out of whom the Devil was cast) sitting at Jesus his feet in their right mind, bitterly bewailing their former course, and hating their once-beloved lusts, more than ever they were fond of them? I hope some of you that read these lines, can say thus much concerning your selves, as the *Apostle* doth of himself, and others of his Brethren, *Titus* 3. 3. *We our selves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, &c. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, &c.* And can you, who are the very *Epistle of Christ*, writ not with Ink, but with the *Spirit of the living God*, in the fleshy Tables of your hearts, stand yet in doubt whether that word came from God, which is thus able to bring you home to God? How long might a man sit at the foot of a *Philosopher*, before he could find such a commanding power go forth with his Lectures of Morality, to take away his old heart full of lusts (as the Sea is of creeping things innumerable) and put a new and holy one in the Room of it? Some indeed in their *School* have been a little refined from the dregs of sensuality, as *Polemo*, who went a Drunkard to hear *Plato*, and returned a temperate man from his Lecture; and no wonder if we consider what violence such broad and beastly sins offer to the very light of a natural conscience; that lesser light appointed by God to rule the night of the Heathen World: But take the best *Philosopher* of them all, and you shall find sins that are of a little finer spinning (such as spiritual wickednesses and heart sins are) that are acted behind the Curtain, in the retiring Room of the inner man; these were so far from being the spoils of their victorious Arms, that they could never come to the sight of them. But the Word treads on these high places of spiritual wickednesses, and leaves not any strong hold of them untaken. It pursues sin and Satan to their boggs and fastnesses, it digs the sinners lusts like Vermin out of their Holes and Burrows, where they earth themselves. The heart it self is no safe Sanctuary for sin to sit in, the Word will take it thence (as *Joab* from the Horns of the Altar) to slay it; those corruptions that escaped the Sword of the Moralist, and honest Heathen, even these fall by the edge of the Word. I cannot give a better instance for this converting power of the Word, than by presenting you with the miraculous victories obtained by it over the hearts of men, when the *Apostles* were sent out first to preach the grace of Christ, and as it were, to begin the Combination of the Gospel-Ministry, wherever they came, they found the world up in Arms against them, and the black Prince of it, the Devil at the Head of their Troops, to make their utmost resistance against them; yet what unheard-of victories were got by them? Was it not strange, that without drawing any other Sword, than the everlasting Gospel, they should turn the World upside down,

as their enemies themselves confessed? slighting the Devils works, casting down his holds wherever they came, & overcoming those barbarous Heathens, whom the Devil had held in his peaceable possession so many thousand years! to renounce their Idolatries in which they had been bred, and train'd up all their dayes, to receive a new Lord, and him a crucified Jesus, and this at the report of a few silly men, loaden with the vilest reproaches that the wit of man could invent, or malice rake together, to besmear their persons, and render the Doctrine they preached, odious to the World: This, I say, is such an unheard of Conquest, as could not be obtained by any less than the arm of the Almighty: Especially if we cast in two or three circumstances to give a further accent to the heightning of this consideration: As

First, The meanness of the persons employed to preach this Doctrine; mean in their condition and rank, being of the floor and lowest of the people, and many of them as mean in their intellectual accomplishments, as external port and garb in the world, having no help from humane learning to raise their parts, and set a varnish upon their discourses. Men very unfit for such an enterprize (God knows) had the stress and success of their works depended on their own furniture, which put their very enemies to a stand whence they had their wisdom; knowing well, how low their Parentage, and unsuitable their breeding were to give them any advantage toward such a high undertaking, *Act* 4. 13. Surely these poor men could contribute no more by any thing that was their own, to that wonderful success which followed their labours, than the blowing of the Ramms Horns could to the laying of *Jericho's* Walls flat with the ground, or the sounding of *Jehoshaphat's* musical instruments to the routing of so formidable an Army of his enemies, so that we must attribute it to the breath of God, by which they sounded the Trumpet of the Gospel, and his sweet Spirit charming the hearts of their Hearers, that such mighty works were done by them.

Secondly, If we consider the nature of the Doctrine they held forth and commended to the world which was not only strange and new, enough to make the Hearers shy of it, but so contrary to the humour of mans corrupt nature, that it hath not one thought in the sinners heart to befriend it. No wonder indeed, that *Mahomet's* spiced Cup went down so glib, it being so luscious and pleasing to mans carnal palate. We are soon wooed to espouse that for Truth, which gratifies the flesh, and easily persuaded to deliver up our selves into the hands of such opinions as offer fair quarter to our lusts, yea promise them satisfaction. Indeed we cannot much wonder to see Christianity it self generally and readily embraced, when it is presented in *Rome's* whorish dress, with its purity adulterated, and its power emasculated; but take the Doctrine of the Gospel in its own Native excellency, before it falls into these Hucksters hands, and it is such as a carnal heart cannot like, because it layes the Axe to the root of every sin, and bids defiance to all that take part with it: It will suffer no Religion to set her Threshold by its:

its: This may make us step aside (as *Moses* once to behold the bush) to see this great wonder. A Doctrine believed and embraced, that is pure Non-sence to carnal Reason, teaching us to be saved by anothers righteousness, wise with anothers wisdom, to trust in him as a God, that was himself a child, to rely on him to deliver us from the power of Sin and Satan, that fell himself under the wrath of men. O how great a gulf of Objections which reason brings against this Doctrine, must be shot, before a man can come to close with it! And yet this Doctrine to find such welcome that never any Prince at the beat of his Drumm had his Subjects flock more in throngs to list themselves in his Muster-roll, than the *Apostles* had multitudes of Believers offering themselves to come under baptism, the Military Oath given by them to their Converts.

Thirdly, Add but one more, consider how little worldly encouragement this Word they preached gave to its Disciples; and you will say, God was in it of a truth. Had it been the way to thrive in the world to turn Christian, or had it won the favour of Kings and Princes to have been their Disciples, and taught them how to climb the Hill of Honour, we could not have wondered to have seen so many worship the rising Sun; but alas the Gospel which they preached, comes not with these bribes in its hand, no golden Apples thrown in the way to intice them on, Christ bids his Disciples stoop not to take up Crowns for their Heads, but a Cross for their Backs, *If any one will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me.* They must not dream of getting the worlds treasure, which they have not, but prepare to part with what they have: To be sure when the *Apostles* preached it, the way it led to,

was not to Princes Palaces with their preferments, but to Prisons and Dungeons, Racks and Gibbets; now to see poor creatures so far to forget all their worldly interest, estates and honour, children of their loyns, and wives of their bosome, so as to trample upon them, yea joyfully welcome the bloudest deaths their enemies could invent, and thank their persecutors for the favour of admitting them to share with the torments of their brethren, as if they had gone to divide a spoil, and not to be made one: This surely speaks a heavenly power to be in that Doctrine, on whose Altar, and for whose defence, they were so willing to be sacrificed. But though the profession of the Gospel did cost them so dear, yet would it but have indulged its Disciples to have aimed at their own honour, and pleased themselves with the renown that they should win by their sufferings, and that their names should be writ and read in the leaves of fame when they were dead and gone, some *Roman* spirit haply might have been found to have endured as much: Or if it had taught them, that they should have ascended in their fiery Chariot of Martyrdom, to receive heavens glory as the purchase of their patience and prowess, this might have hardened some *Papish* shaveling against the fear of those bloody deaths they met with: but the Doctrine they preached allows neither, but teaches them when they have done their best, and suffered the worst that their enemies wrath can inflict for the cause of God, then to renounce the honour of all, and write themselves unprofitable servants. All these Considerations twisted together, make a strong Cord to draw any that have stagger'd in this particular, to a firm belief of the Divine Parentage of the Scriptures.

CHAP. XII.

Why the Word of God is called the sword of the Spirit; and from it the Point raised.

HAVING dispatched the first part, which presented us with the Weapon it self commended to the Christians use, i. e. *The Word of God.* The second part of the *Text* now comes under our consideration, and that is the Notion under which this Weapon is commended, or the Metaphor in which it is covered, i. e. *The Sword of the Spirit.*

And here a double enquiry would be made.

First, Why the Word of God is compared to a Sword.

Secondly, Why the Sword is attributed to the Spirit, and bears his name, *The Sword of the Spirit.*

For the first let this suffice; The Sword being both of general and constant use among Souldiers, and also that Weapon with which they not only defend themselves, but do the greatest execution upon their enemies, most fitly sets forth the necessity and excellent use of the Word of God, by which the Christian both defends himself, and offends, yea cuts down before him all his enemies.

For the second, Why is this Sword attributed to

the Spirit? Some take the Abstract here to be put for the Concrete, *πνεῦμα* for *πνευματικός*, Sword of the Spirit, for the spiritual Sword, as if it were no more but Take the spiritual Sword, which is the Word of God; according to that of the *Apostle*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnall, but mighty; that is, spiritual.* Indeed, Satan being a spirit, must be fought with spiritual Arms. And such is the Word; a spiritual Sword. But this, though true, reacheth not the full sence of the place, where *πνεῦμα* is taken *personaliter*, for the person of the holy Spirit. And in these three respects the written Word is the Sword of the Spirit.

First, He is the Author of it: A weapon it is which his hand alone formed and fashioned; it came not out of any creatures Forge; *Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Secondly, The Spirit is the only true Interpreter of the Word. Hence that known passage of *Bernard*, *Quo spiritu facta sunt Scripturae, eo spiritu legi desiderant, ipso etiam intelligenda sunt*, The Scriptures must

must be read, and can be understood by that Spirit alone by whom they were made. He that made the Lock, can only help us to a Key that will fit its Wards, and open its fence; *No Scripture is of private interpretation*, 2 Pet. 1. And why not? It follows, Because it came not from any private spirit at first; *For the prophecy came not by the will of man, &c. Ver. 21.* And who knows the mind of the Spirit, so well as himself?

Thirdly, It is only the Spirit of God can give the Word its efficacy and power in the soul. It is his Office as I said, *Sigillare animum caractere rerum creditarum*, except he layes his weight on the truths we read and hear, to apply them close, and as it were cut their very image in our minds and hearts, they leave no more impression, than a seal set upon a Rock or stone would do, still the mind fluctuates, and the heart is unsatisfied notwithstanding our own and others utmost endeavours to the contrary. It was not the Disciples Rowing, but Christs coming that could lay the storm, or bring them to shore. Not all our study and enquiry, can fix the mind, or pacifie the heart in the belief of the Word, till the Spirit of God comes. *Do you now believe?* saith Christ to his Disciples, *Joh. 16. 31.* How oft alas had the same things sounded in their ears, and knockt at their door for entertainment, but never could be received, till now that the Spirit put in his finger to lift up the Latch! *B. Davenant* on *Colos.* tells us a story out of *Gerson*, concerning a holy man whom himself knew to be sadly beaten and buffeted with frequent doubts and scruples, even so as to call into question an Article of Faith, but afterward was brought into so clear a light, and full evidence of its truth, that he doubted no more of it, than of his own being alive, and this certainty (saith *Gerson*) did not arise, *ex nova aliqua ratione & demonstratione, sed ex humilitione, & captivitate intellectus atque admirabili quadam Dei illuminatione à montibus æternis*, did not come from any new Argument he had found out to demonstrate the truth of it, but from the Spi-

rit of God humbling and captivating his proud understanding, and admirably irradiating the same.

The words thus opened, present us with this important Doctrinal Conclusion.

Doct. That the written word, or if you will, *The Scripture is the Sword by which the Spirit of God enables his Saints to overcome all their enemies.* The Spirit will do nothing for them without the word, and they can do nothing to purpose without him. The Word is the Sword, and the Spirit of Christ the Arm which wields it in and for the Saints. All the great conquests which Christ and his Saints, achieve in the world, they are got with this sword; when Christ comes forth against his enemies, this sword is girded on his Thigh, *Psal. 45. 5. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty*; and his victory over them ascribed to it, *verse 4. And in thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth.* That is, the word of Truth. We find *Rev. 1. 16. Christ holding seven stars in his right hand*, intimating the choyce care he hath over his people, particularly the Ministers who are more shot at than any other; and how doth he protect them, but by this sharp two-edged Sword coming out of his mouth? This is the great privilege which the poorest believer in the Church hath by the Covenant of grace, such a one as *Adam* had not in the first Covenant. He, when fallen, had a flaming sword to keep him out of *Paradise*, but had no such sword, when innocent, to keep him from sinning, and so from being turned out of that happy place and state. No, he was left to stand upon his own defence, and by his own vigilancy to be a Life-guard to himself. But now the word of God stands between the Saints and all danger. This will the better appear if we single out the chief enemies with whom the Saints War is waged, and shew how they all fall before the Word, and receive their fatal blow from this one Sword, as *Abimelech* slew the three score sons of *Jerubbaal* upon one stone, *Judg. 9. 5.*

CHAP. XIII.

Wherein is shewn how the Persecutors of Gods Truth and Church are conquered by this Sword.

THE bloody Persecutor, who breaths slaughter against the Saints, and pursues them with fire and faggot: Such a race of Gyants there ever was, & will be, as long as the Devil hath any kindred alive in the world, who when it lyes in their power to maintain their fathers Kingdom of darkness, will not fear to trample under their feet those stars of heaven, whose light acquaints the world with their horrid impieties, and so hazards the weakning of the Devils interest in the minds of men. Hence those bloody Wars raised, cruel Fires of Martyrdome kindled, and Massacres practised upon the Saints, with many devilishly witty inventions of torments, that these innocent souls might linger in their pains, and stay the longer in the jaws of Death, thereby to feel themselves to dye, as one of them barba-

rously and inhumanely said! Well, what Ladders doth God use to scale these Mountains of Pride? Where are the Weapons with which the people of God resist and overcome these Monsters of men that thus defie the Lord and his Hosts? Wouldst thou know where? Truly, they are to be seen in the Tower of David, builded for an Armory. The word of God I mean, here hang the shields and bucklers, the swords and darts, by which the worthies of God have in all Ages defended themselves stoutly against the rage of Persecutors, and also triumphed gloriously over their greatest force and power. Out of this brook they take those smooth stones by which they prostrate these Goliaths. This sort of the Churches enemies are overcome two wayes: Either by their conversion, or destruction. Now the

Word

Word of God is the Sword that effects both. *It hath two edges*, Heb. 4. 12. and so cuts on both sides.

SECT. I.

First, To the Elect, who for a time through ignorance and prejudice, are join'd with the Saints enemies, as busie sticklers, and bloody Persecutors, as the worst of the Pack. The word of God is a sacrificing knife, to rip open their hearts, and let out the hot purrified blood of their sins, which made them so mad against the Church of God, yea, and to prepare them also by converting grace, as an offering acceptable unto God, as the *Apostle* excellently sheweth, Rom. 15. 16. Thus the Murderers of our blessed Lord, we find them by one Sermon of Peter so strongly wrought upon, that they presently vomit up his blood, as sick of it, as ever they were for it; and at one prick that the point of this Sword gave them, crying for Quarter at Gods hands, yea throwing down their persecuting Arms, and most freely entering their names into his Muster-Roll, whose life but a few days before they had so cruelly taken away, about *three thousand* of them at one clap being *baptized in his name*, Acts 2. 41. Yea, Paul himself, whom I may call as *Erasmus* doth *Augustine*, before his conversion, *The great Whale*, that did so much mischief to the Church of Christ, what hook did he use to strike him with but the Word? Never had Christ a more furious enemy in the world, than this man: His heart was so enflamed with rage against the Saints, that the fiery steam thereof came out of his lips, as from the mouth of a hot Furnace, *breathing slaughter against them wherever he went*, Acts 9. 1. Now what force of Arms, besides the Word preached, did Christ send to take in the Castle of this bloody mans heart? First, Christ himself took him immediately to task, preaching such a thundring Sermon from his heavenly Pulpit, as dismounted this proud Rider, and sent him, bound in the Fetters of his own troubled soul, Prisoner even to that place, where he thought to have clapt up others; and then left his Spirit to carry on the work of his conversion, by applying and keeping the Plaister of the Word close to his heart, which how powerfully it wrought on him, he himself tells us, Rom. 7. 9. *When the Commandment came, sin revived and I died*. That is, when the Law came by the convictions of the Spirit to take in his soul, and pierce his conscience, then sin revived those lusts which lay like a sleepy Lyon, now in his awakened conscience roared so dreadfully, that he was as it were struck dead with the terror of them, as a poor damned creature, and would undoubtedly have gone away in that swoon of horror and despair, had not the joyful news of Gospel-grace been by the same Word and Spirit applied seasonably, to bring him to the life of hope and comfort again. Thus was this boisterous, furious enemy of the Saints, chained and tamed by the terrors of the Law, changed and renewed by the gentleness and mercy of the Gospel; That he became no more like himself than a Ravening Wolf is to an innocent Lamb, more ready to lay down his own life now for the defence of the Gospel, than before con-

SECT. II.

Secondly, The Saints persecuting enemies are vanquish't, when ruined and destroyed. Indeed if they continue impenitent, and harden themselves against the Truths and Servants of God, that is the end they must all look to come to. They are like Ravenous beasts, *made to be taken and destroyed*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. and they may know before-hand, as the certainty of their ruines, so what shall procure it; and that is the Word of God; see Rev. 11. 5. *If any will hurt them; fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed*. It is spoken of those that shall dare to oppose and persecute the faithful Preachers of the Gospel, fire comes out of their mouths to destroy them; though they have their will on the bodies of the Saints, butchering and burning them, yet the Word they preach will be their destruction. That lives, and staves behind to pay the Saints debts, and avenge them on their enemies. God is resolved they must and shall in this manner be killed: The Word must give them the fatal stroke. *Julian* confest as much, when bleeding under his deadly wound, though the Arrow came out of a *Persian* bow, yet the Wretch knew it was sent by a higher than a *Persian* hand: *Vicisti Galilae, O Galilean, thou hast overcome* and been too hard for me; his conscience told him, that his spight against the Truth of Christ, was his death; and many more besides him have acknowledg'd as much when under the hand of justice. The face of the Word of God which they have opposed, hath appeared to them as engraven upon their judgments. O this Sword of the Word, it hath a long reach! it is at the breast of every enemy God and his Saints have in the world; and though at present they cannot see whence their danger should come (they are so great and powerful, so safe and secure as they think) yet the Word of God having set down their doom already, God will sooner or later open one door or other to let in their destruction upon them. When the Prophet would express the indubitable ruine of the *Philistines* impending, mark what prognostick he gives, Zeph. 2. 5. *Wo unto the inhabitants of the Sea-coast, the Word of the Lord is against you*. As if he had said, You are a lost undone people, the whole world cannot save you, for *the Word of the Lord is against you*. The threatening of the Word like lightning or mildew, blasts wherever it goes, and its curse burns to the very root. Hence all the seven Nations of *Canaan* fell into the mouth of the *Israelites*, like the ripe fruit into the mouth of him that shakes the Tree. The Word of the Lord cursing them, had gone before them to make their conquest certain and easie. This *Balaak* knew, and therefore would have given so much for a few words out of *Balaam's* mouth to have *curst Israel in Gods Name*. The truth is, though we look upon the Monarchs of the world, and their Armies, as those which have the sway of the affairs of the world, yet these are no more than the lie on the Wheel. It is the Word of God that hath the great stroke in all that

that is done on the worlds stage. *I have set thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to build and to plant,* Jer. 1. 10. Indeed the whole earth is Gods ground: And who hath power to build on his ground, or pull down, but himself? And in his Word he hath given his mind what he will have done to his enemies, and for his Saints;

and therefore as all the mercies they have, they receive and acknowledge them as gracious performances of the promise, so all the judgements executed on their enemies, as accomplishments of the threatnings of the Word, called therefore, *The judgements written,* Psal. 49. 9.

CHAP. XIV.

The Word of God how victorious a Sword over the Seducer and Heretick, shewn.

2. **T**He Seducer is another enemy the Christian hath to cope with; and no less dangerous than the other: Nay, in this respect far more formidable. The persecutor can kill only the body, but the Seducer comes to poyson the soul. Better to be slain out-right by his Sword, than to be taken alive (as the Apostle phraseth it) in this snare of the Devil, which these whom he sends forth a birding for souls, privily lay, even where they are oft least suspected. When Paul fell into the mouth of the Persecutor, he could yet glory, and rejoyce that he had escaped the latter. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness,* 2 Tim. 4. 5. See how this holy man triumphs and flourisheth his colours, as if the field were fought, and the day won; whereas good man, he was now going to lay his head upon the block under the hand of bloody Nero's Headsman, as you may perceive, ver. 6. *I am now ready to be offered up.* (Alluding to the kind of Death 'tis like) he was shortly to undergo.) But you will possibly say, What great cause then had he to cry *victroria*, when his affairs were in such a desperate and deplored condition? Yes, this made him triumph, *He had kept the faith*; and that was a thousand times more joy and comfort to him, than the laying down his life was trouble. If he had left the faith by cowardize, or chopt it away for any false doctrine, he had lost his soul by losing of that; but having kept the faith, he knew that he did but part with his life to receive a better at Gods hands, than was taken from him by mans. The Locusts mentioned Rev. 9. (which Mr. Mede takes to be the Saracens, who were so great a scourge and plague to the Roman world newly Christianized) we find *they had tails like Scorpions, and sting in their tails,* ver. 10. which the Learned Writer forenamed, interprets to be their cursed Mahumedan Doctrine, with which they poysoned the souls of people wherever their conquering Sword came. It seems though the Sword of War in the hand of a Barbarous bloody enemy, be a heavy judgement to a people, yet the propagation of cursed errors is a greater; This is the sting in the tail of that judgement. I do not doubt but many that were godly might fall by the Sword of that enemy in such a general calamity, but only those that were not among Gods sealed ones felt the sting in their tail, by being poysoned with their cursed imposture; and therefore they alone are said *to be hurt by them,* ver. 4.

We may be cut off by an enemies Sword and not be hurt, but we cannot drink in their false Doctrines, and say so. Now the Word of God is the Sword whereby the Spirit enables the Saints to defend themselves against this enemy; yea, to rout and ruine this subtil band of Satan. We read of *Apollon*, Acts 18. that *he mightily convinced the Jews*, he did as it were knock them down with the weight of his reasoning: And out of what Armory fetcht he the Sword with which he so prevailed? See ver. 28. *Shewing by the Scriptures,* (not their Cabala) that *Jesus was Christ*; and therefore is said to be *mighty in the Scriptures,* ver. 24. A mighty man of valour, and so expert through his excellent knowledge in them, that the erroneous Jews could no more stand before him holding this Sword in his hand, than a child with a wooden Dagger can against a Giant formidably arm'd with killing weapons. When Paul warns Timothy to stand upon his defence carefully against Seducers, which snapt so many every where, he can devise no better counsel how he might keep out of their hands, than by sending him to the Scriptures, and bidding him shut himself up within these, as in a Town of War. Tim. 3. 14. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned*; and in the next verse he opens himself, and shews what lesson he means that he had learned, by telling him, that *from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation*; and by consequence, wiser than all his enemies, if he stuck close to them. Other arms we may load ourselves with, by tumbling over many Authors, but he that hath this Sword, and hath been but taught of the Spirit the use of this weapon, is provided well enough to meet the stoutest Champion for error the Devil hath on his side in an encounter. With this, poor women have been able to disarm great Doctors of their studied Arguments, ruffling all their Art and Logick with one plain place of Scripture: As she who brained *Abimelech*, that great Commander, by tumbling a piece of a Millstone on his head. Out of this Armory come those weapons Paul tells us are so *mighty through God, casting down imaginations, or reasonings, λογικὰς κατασκευάς*, by which an *Ancient* will have the *Greek Philosophers Syllogismes* to be meant. Indeed he that hath the Word on his side, and a holy skill to use it, hath as much advantage of his Adversary that comes with other Armour (let him be never so good a Fencer:) as a man with a good Sword, hath

bath over him that comes forth only with a Bull-rush in his hand. All error dreads the light of the Word, and fears more to be examin'd by that, than a Thief does to be tryed before a strict Judge. *Hereticorum sententias prodidisse est superasse*, saith Hieron. unfold them, or bring them and the Word face to face, and like Cain, they hang down their head, they are put to shame. This is the only certain Ordinal to try suspected opinions at. If they can walk upon this fiery Law unhurt, unproved, they may safely pass for Truths, and none else. Paul tells us of some that will not endure sound doctrine, 2 Tim. 4. Alas how should they, when their minds are not found? it is too searching for them. Gouty feet cannot go but on soft way that gently yields to them: Such must have Doctrine, that will comply with their humour, which the Word will not do, but rather judge them, and this they think it will do too soon at the great day, therefore now they shun it so much, lest it should torment them before their time. Thus the Quakers, they have their skulking hole to which they run from the Scripture, at whose bar they know their opinions would be cast undoubtedly, and therefore appeal to another where they may have a more favourable hearing, the light within them, or in plain English, their natural conscience, a Judge which is known too well to be corrupt, and easily bribed to speak what the lusts of men will oft have him do. Ah poor creatures, what a sad change have they made! to leave the Word that is *κατά τὴν ἀκρίβειαν ἀληθείας*, an inflexible Rule of Faith, and can no more lye or deceive them, than God himself can do; to trust the guidance of themselves to themselves, a more ignorant, sottish, unfaithful guide than which the Devil could not have chosen for them. He that is his own teacher (saith Bernard) is sure to have a fool for his Master: And Solomon, yea a greater than Solomon, God himself by Solomon saith, *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that hearkeneth to counsel is wise*, Prov. 12. 15. but he most wise, that makes the Word of God the men of his counsel. The Papist he hath his Thicket and Wood at his back also, Antiquity, and traditions to which he flies before the face of the Scripture for sanctuary, as Adam did to a Bush when God came walking to him. As if any Antiquity were so Authentick as Gods own Oracles; and any traditions of men to be laid in the balance with the Scripture. To name no more, the Socinian he folds up himself in his own proud reason, and takes such state on him, that the Scripture must come to that to be fenced, and not that stoop to it. He must have a Religion and Scripture that fits the model his own reason draws, or will have neither. The root of many prodigious errors and Hereticks; like those of whom Tertullian speaks, *Qui Platonismum & Aristotelismum Christianismum proceuderunt*, who went to the Philosophers Forge to shape a Christianity. What is this, but to carry gold to be weigh'd at the Chandelers Scales, and to look for the Sun by the light of the Moon. A Modern Diviner saith, Most Heresies have sprung either *ex Sano Sani fastu*, vel *ex Anni ignorantia*, vel *ex Anni dialectica*, from pride, ignorance, or the Sophistry of Reason. The last of

which seems to be the shelf on which Paul himself observes some to have split, and concerning the faith to have erred, 1 Tim. 6. 21. and therefore so affectionately exhorts Timothy to keep off this dangerous shoar, and steer his course by the Word, ver. 20. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, &c. For this which is here committed to him, I take for no other than the form of sound words he exhorts him to hold fast in the Second Epist. chap. 1. ver. 13.

Object. But we see Hereticks quote Scripture for their most prodigious errors, and draw this Sword for their defence, as well as the Orthodox: How then is it such a powerful instrument and engine against error?

Answer. What will not men of subtil heads, corrupt hearts, and bold faces, dare to do for the carrying on their wicked party, when once they have espoused an error or any sinful way? Karah and his ungodly company dare give out that the Lord is among them, and they have as much to do with the Priesthood, as Aaron himself on whom the holy Oyl was poured, Numb. 16. 13. And Zedekiah that Arch-flatterer fears nor to father his lye on the God of Truth himself, 1 Kings 22. 11. He made him horns of Iron, and said, Thus saith the Lord, With these thou shalt push the Syrians until thou hast consumed them; whereas God never spake such a word. It is no marvel then to see any lay their Bastard-brats at Gods door, and cry, They have Scripture on their side. By this impudence they may abuse credulous souls into a belief of what they say, as a Cheater may pick the purses of ignorant people, by shewing them something like the Kings Broad Seal, which was indeed his own forgery; yea, God may suffer them to seduce others of more raised parts and understanding, as a just judgment on them for rebelling against the light of their own consciences. As Pharaoh by the false Miracles of the Magicians was set off further from any compliance with Moses. And those of the Anti-Christian faction, 2 Thess. 1. 10, 11. who because they received not the Truth in the love of it, that they might be saved, for this cause God sends them strong delusions, that they should believe a lye. But sincere souls that search humbly for Truth, and have no other designs in their enquiry after it, but that they may know the Will of God and obey it, they shall find upon their faithful prayers to God, a light most clear, shining from the Scripture, to guide them safe from those pit-falls of Damning Errors, into which others fall, towards whom the dark side of this cloud stands; The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments, Psal. 111. 10. The Fox, they say, when hard put to it, will fall in subtilly with the Dogs, and hunt with them as one of their company, but even then his strong scent which he cannot leave behind him, bewrays him.

Thus Hereticks, for to shelter their errors, will crowd in among Scripture-Truths, and by their fair colours, and false glosses, make them seem to be of their company, but they cannot so perfume their rotten opinions, but their rank scent and savour will be smelt, and discerned by those who have their senses

ses exercised. Never any Heretick got by appealing to the Scriptures. What Christ saith in another case, *Matth. 26. 51. All they that take the Sword, shall perish by the Sword*; is most true of all Hereticks,

they are confounded and confuted by that very Sword of the Word, which they lift up to defend them withal.

C H A P. XV.

Our third enemy, made up of an Army of corruptions and lusts within, and the power of this Sword of the Spirit to Conquer them.

THirdly, Our own lusts make the next Adversary we have to grapple with. Thus the further we go, the worse enemy we meet. These are more formidable than both the former. Partly because they are within us, men of our own house, lusts of our own bosome that rise up against us; and partly because they hold correspondence with a foreign foe also, the Devil himself, who as he did beat man at first with his own Rib, so he continues to do us the worst mischief with our own flesh. The fire of lust is ours, but the flame commonly is his, because his temptations are the Bellows that blow it up. And when such a fire meets with such a strong wind to spread and carry it on its wings, whither will it flie? O how hard to flake and quench it! A whole Legion of Devils are as soon cast out of the body, as one lust out of the soul; yea, sooner. Satan likes his lodging better in the heart, than in the house, and is lother out. He came the more willingly out of the Man into the Swine, *Matth. 8. 31.* because by coming out of his body, and contenting himself a while with a meaner house (the Swine I mean) he hoped for a fairer way thereby to get fuller possession of their souls, which indeed he obtain'd, Christ leaving them most justly to his Rule, that were so soon weary of his sweet company. Now the Word is the only weapon, like *Goliath's Sword*, *None to this* for the hewing down, and cutting off this stubborn enemy. The Word of God can master our lusts when they are in their ruffe and pride: If ever Lust rageth more than other, it is when youthful blood boyls in our veins. Youth is heady, and lust then hot and impetuous. Our Sun is climbing higher still, and we think it a great while to Night; so that it must be a strong arm that brings a young man off his lust, who hath his palate at best advantage to taste sensual pleasures with; the vigour of his strength to take in more of the delights of the flesh thancripled age can do, and further from fear of Deaths Gun-shot (as he thinks) than old men who are upon the very marches of the Grave, and carry the scent of the earth about them, into which they are sure suddenly to be resolved. Well, let the word of God meet this young Gallant in all his bravery, with his feast of sensual delights before him, and but whisper a few syllables in his ear, give his conscience but a prick with the point of its Sword, and it shall make him flie in as great haste from them all, as *Abalom's Brethren* did from their feast, when they saw their brother *Amnon* murdered at the Table. When *David* would give the young man a receipt to cure him of his lusts, (not one, but all) how he

may cleanse his whole course and way, he bids him only wash in this Jordan, *Psalm. 119. 9. By what means, or wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* It is called the rod of his strength, *Psalm. 110. 2.* God, we know, wrought those great Miracles whereby he plagued the Egyptians, and saved the Israelites with the Rod in Moses his hand, by that he tamed proud Pharaoh, making him and his people at last to let go their hold of the Israelites, yea in a manner to thrust them out from them, and be as glad of their room, as before they were of their company. By that he divided the Sea for Israel's passage, and covered the Egyptians in its waves. By that he smote the Rock: And by this Rod of his Word he doth as great wonders in the souls of men as these: By this he finites their consciences, cleaves the Rocks of their hard hearts, divides the waves of their lusts, and brings poor sinners from under the power of Sin and Satan. Never could *Austin* get a Jayl-delivery from his lusts, till he heard that voice, *Tolle lege, tolle lege*; upon which, as himself tells us, *Lib. Confess. 8.* he presently took up the Bible; and that one place, *Rom. 13.* to which his eye was directed, once read like a mighty earth-quake did so shake all the powers of his soul, that the prison-doors of his heart immediately flew open, and those chains of lusts which with all his skill and strength he could never file off, did now on a sudden fall off, and he so strangely Metamorphosed, that *Quas amittere metus erat, jam dimittere gaudium fuit*; Those lusts, to lose which was once all his fear, now to pack them away, was his joy. Never man, by his own confession, was more slave to his lusts, and tyed with a stronger chain of delight to them, than himself was; he did as he saith, *Voluptate in ceno tanquam cinamoni & unguentis preciosis*; he tumbled in the puddle of his filthy lusts with as much delight, as if he had been rowling in a bed of spices, and anointing himself with the most precious Oyntments; yet this one word came with such a commanding power to him, that it tore them out of his very heart, and turned his love into a cordial hatred of them, who before would have let his heart sooner been plucked out of his bosome, than these taken out of his heart. And as the Word is the weapon by which he with a strong hand brings poor sinners out of the power of Satan and sin, into a state of freedom, so he useth it to defend his Saints from all after-storms of temptations, by which Satan, now thrown out of his Kingdom, endeavours to recover the same. Those Kingdoms indeed that are got by the Sword, must be kept by Sword.

Sword. David will tell us how he stood upon his guard, and made good his ground against this enemy, Psal. 17. 4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.* As if he had said, Would you know how it comes to pass, that I escape those ungodly works and practices, which men ordinarily take liberty to do? I must ascribe it to the good Word of God, 'tis this I consult with, and by it am kept from those foul ways whereinto others, that make no use of the Word for their defence, are carried by Satan the destroyer of Mankind. Can we go against sin and Satan with a better weapon than Christ used to vanquish the Tempter with? And certainly Christ did it *per modum exempli*, to set us an example how we should come arm'd into the field against them; for Christ could with one beam shot from his Deity (if he had pleased to exert it) have as easily laid the bold Fiend prostrate at his foot, as afterwards he did them that came to attach him; but he chose rather

to conceal the Majesty of his Divinity, and let Satan come up closer to him, that so he might confound him with the Word, and thereby give a proof of that Sword to his Saints, which he was to leave with them for their defence against the same enemy. The Devil is set out by the *Leviathan*, Isa. 27. 1. him God threatens to punish with his strong Sword; alluding to that great Fish, the *Wale*, which fears no fish like the *Sword-fish*, by whom this great devourer of all other fish is oft killed; for receiving one prick from his Sword, he hasteth to the shoar, and beats himself against it till he dyes. Thus the Devil the great devourer of souls, who sports himself in the sea of this world, even as the *Leviathan* in the waters, and swallows the greatest part of Mankind without any power to make resistance against him, is himself vanquished by the Word. When he hath to do with a Saint arm'd with this Sword, and instructed how to use this weapon, he then, and not till then, meets his match.

CHAP. XVI.

The fourth and last enemy the Christian engageth, made up of many Troops of Afflictions, together with his victory over them, obtained by this Sword of the Word.

Fourthly, A fourth enemy that meets the Christian, is an Army made up of many bands of afflictions both outward and inward, sometimes one, sometimes another assailing him; yea, oft a whole body of them pouring their shot together upon them. This was Paul's case, *Without were fightings, within were fears*, 2 Cor. 7. 5. He endured a great fight of external afflictions and buffetings within his own bosome at once. And that is sad indeed, when a City is on fire within at the same time that an enemy is battering its Walls from without. Yet this is oft the condition of the best Saints, to have both the Rod on their backs, and Rebukes from God in their spirits, at once, Psal. 39. 11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.* God sometimes corrects with outward crosses, but smiles with inward manifestations, and then he whips them, as I may so say, with a *Rosemary-Rod*; the one sweetens and alleviates the other. At another time he sends a cross, and incloseth a frown in it. He whips with outward affliction, and, as an angry father, every lash he gives his child, tells him, This is for that fault, and that for this, which exceedingly adds to the smart of the correction, and is the very knot on the Whip, to see his father so much displeased with him; And when the poor Christian lies thus under the hand of an afflicting God, or under the rebukes of a frowning God, Satan will not be long from the Christian, or wanting to throw his Salt and Vinegar into the wounds that God hath made in his flesh or spirit, thereby to encrease his dolour, and so lead him further into temptation one way or other, if he can have his will. Indeed God often sends so many Troops of various afflictions to quarter upon some one Christian, that it puts him

hard to it, to bid them all welcome, and entertain them with patience; yea, it would pose any one (that knows not what service the Word of God doth the Christian, and the supplies it brings him in) to conceive, how his spirit should be kept, and his faith from being eaten up, and swallowed into despair by them. But the Word of God, this bears all the charge he is at. This is his Counsellour and Comforter: David tells us plainly, his heart had dyed within him but for it, Psal. 119. 92. *If thy Law had not been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction.* The Word was his spiritual *Abishag* from which his soul gat all its warmth; all the worlds enjoyments heaped on him, would have left him cold at heart if this had not lain in his bosome to bring him to a kindly heat of inward peace and comfort, verse 50. of the same Psalm; *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy Word hath quickned me.* Not the Crown in hope, (for some think it was not when this Psalm was penn'd on his head) but the Word in his heart to which he was beholden for his comfort. A word of promise is more necessary at such a time to a poor soul, than warm cloaths are to the body in cold weather. When Adam was thrust naked out of *Paradise* into the cold blasts of a miserable world, where from his own guilty conscience within, and crosses without, he was sure to meet with trouble enough; Then God gave him a word of promise (as you may observe) to fence his soul, before he taught him to make Coats to cloath his body, Gen. 3. 15. compared with 21. The Lord knew full well how indispensably necessary a word of promise was to keep him from being made a prey the second time to the Devil, and from being swallowed up with the dismal light of those miseries and sorrows in which he had thrown himself and

posterity; therefore would not suffer him to lye open to the shock of their assaults one day, but presently puts the Sword of a Promise into his hand, that with it he might defend and comfort his sorrowful heart in the midst of all his troubles. It was the speech of a Holy man, after God had made that sweet place, Mat.

11. 28. *Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, &c.* the Messenger to open his Dungeon of soul-trouble, and bring him into the light of inward joy; that he had better be without meat, drink, light, air, earth, life and all, than without this one comfortable Scripture. If one single promise, like an ear of corn rubbed in the hand of Faith, and applied by the Spirit of Christ, can afford such a full satisfying meal of joy to a hunger-bitten, pining soul, O what price can we set on the whole field of the Scripture, which stands so thick with promises every way as cordial as this! Love is witty, and sets the head on work to devise names for the person we love dearly, such names as may at once express how highly we prize them, and also yet more endear them to us by carrying on them the superscription of that sweetness which we conceive to be in them. Thus many holy Persons have commended the Promises to us with their appreciating names. The Saints Legacies. The Breasts of God full of milk of grace and comfort. The Saints plank to swim upon to Heaven. Indeed we might rob the world of all her Jewels, and justly hang them on the ear of the promise, apply all the excellencies she boasts of, unto the promises. There is more riches and treasure to

be had in one promise, than all the gold and silver of the Indies is worth; *Exceeding great and precious promises*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. by them a poor believer may lay claim to Heaven and Earth at once; for godliness hath the promise of this life and the other also. But that which in this place I would commend their excellency from, is the admirable service they do, and succour they afford a poor soul in the day of his greatest distress. They are the Granary of spiritual provision, whereby our Joseph, our dear Lord Jesus, nourisheth and preserveth alive his brethren in a time of Famine. They are the *Hive of Sweetness*, where the believing soul in the Winter of affliction (when nothing is to be gather'd abroad from the Creature) both lyes warmly, and lives plentifully on the stock of comfort there laid up. They are, in a word, the fair Havens, and safe Road into which the tempted soul puts his weather-beaten ship, where it lies secure till the Heavens clear, and the storm is over, which the World, sin and Satan raise upon him: Yea, when Death it self approacheth, and the Devil hath but one cast more for the Game, one skirmish more to get or lose the victory for ever, then Faith on the promise carries the Christians soul out of the Garrison of his body (where he hath endured so hard a siege) with colours flying, and joy triumphing to Heaven, leaving only his flesh behind in the Hands of Death, and that also with an assured hope of having it redeemed out of its power ere it be long, at the day of Resurrection and Restitution of all things.

CHAP. XVII.

The Church of Rome charged of high presumption, and great cruelty, in disarming the People of this Sword of the Scriptures.

Use 1. **I**S the Word the Sword of the Spirit whereby the Christian vanquisheth his enemies? Then we may justly charge the Church of Rome of cruelty to the souls of people, in disarming them of that weapon with which they alone can defend themselves against their enemies, that seek their eternal ruine. It is true, they have some fig-leaves with which they would fain hide this their shameful practice, making the world believe, they do it in mercy to the people, lest they should cut their fingers, and wound themselves with this weapon. We see (say they) how many Errors and Heresies the world swarms with, by the mistakes of the Vulgar; yea, Peter himself they dare *sub pana* as a Witness on their side: who saith, *that there are some things hard to be understood in Paul's Epistles, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. And therefore the Scripture which is so dangerous for ordinary people to meddle with, they judge it safest to lay it out of their reach, as we do a Sword or edged-tool from children, though they cry never so much for it. See what a fair Glove they draw over so foul a hand. But did Peter, because some unlearned and unstable souls wrested the Scripture, forbid them, or any other how weak so ever, to read the Scripture?

This had carried some weight with it indeed: But we find just the contrary, for in the following verses, the counsel he gives Christians, that they may not be led away with the error of the wicked, is to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, vers. 18. *Lumen est vehiculum influentis*, Light is the Chariot that conveys the influences of the Sun; so the knowledge of Christ brings with it the influences of his grace into the heart. And how did Peter mean they should grow in the knowledge of Christ, if he would not have them read the Scriptures, which is the only book where it is to be learned? but the Papists would have their people learn the knowledge of Christ from their preaching of him, and not from the Scriptures, which they cannot so safely converse with. But,

First, How shall they be assured that what they preach is true, except they have the Scripture, to which, as unto the true Touch-stone, they may bring their Doctrine to be try'd? Thus did the Bereans by Paul's Sermon, *Acts* 17. 11. A Preacher as good, I throw, as any of theirs. And

Secondly, Suppose they preach the Truth, can they warrant that their words shall not be perverted and mistaken by their Hearers? And if they cannot, why then are they suffered to preach in a vulgar

vulgar tongue, when the Word of God (for the same reason) is forbidden to be read by the people in a known tongue? Truly, I am of that *Learned mans* mind, That if God himself may not speak in a vulgar tongue, I see far less reason that a *Frier* should, and so the people should know nothing at all of Christ. *Mede on Jerem. 10. 11.* No, the true reason why they forbid the Scripture to be read, is not to keep them from Errours and Heresies, but to keep them from discovering those which they themselves impose upon them. Such trash as they trade in, would never go off their hand roundly, did they not keep their shop thus dark; which made one of their shavelings so bitterly complain of that *Unlucky Luther* for spoiling their Market, saying, *But for him they might have perswaded the people of Germany to have eat Hay.* Any thing indeed will go down a Blind mans throat. I do not wonder, that their people thus nuzzled in ignorance, do so readily embrace their fopperies, and believe all their forgeries so confidently. The blind man must either sit still, or go whither he pleaseth that leads him. We read of a whole Army, when once smitten with blindness, carry'd out of their way by one single man that had his eyes in his head, *2 Kings 6.* But this we may well wonder at, that Men who know the Scriptures (as many of their Leaders do) and acknowledge their Divinity, dare be so impudent and audacious to intercept this Letter sent from the great God to the sons of men, and not suffer them (except a few whom they think fit) to look on it, though it be superscribed and directed by God himself, not

to any party or sort of men, but to every man where it comes, *Rom. 1. 7-2 Cor. 1. 1.* This is such a piece of impudence as cannot be parallel'd. Wherefore are Laws made, but to be promulg'd? Scripture writ, but to be read and known of all men? I am sure the Apostle by the same authority with which he wrote his *Epistles*, commands them to be read in the Church, *Colos. 4. 16.* And did the Ministers of those Churches pocket them up, and conceal them from the peoples notice, lest they should by perverting them, be made Hereticks? It is too true, some wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction: And so do some for want of care in eating, choak themselves with their bread, must all therefore starve for fear of being choaked? Some hurt themselves and friends with their weapons, must therefore the whole Army be disarm'd, and only a few chief Officers be allowed to wear a Sword by their sides? Truly, if this be Argument enough to seal up the Bible from being read, we must not only deny it to the meaner, and more unlearned sort, but also to the great Rabbies and Doctors of the Chair; for the grossest Heresies have bred in the finest wits. Prodigious errours have been as much beholden to the Sophistry of *Arrius*, as the ignorance of *Arius*: So that the upshot of all will be this, The unlearned must not read the Scripture, because they may pervert them through ignorance; nor the learned, because they may wrest them by their subtilty. Thus we see when proud men will be wiser than God, their foolish minds darken, till they lose the reason and understanding of men.

CHAP. XVIII.

Against the same Church of Rome, for imputing insufficiency to the Scriptures.

Use 2. **T**His falls heavy upon them that charge the holy Scriptures with insufficiency, as not containing all things necessary to salvation. What a horrid blasphemy is this, and reproach to the great God, that he should send his people into the field, and put such a wooden Sword into their hand as is not sufficient to defend them, and cut their way through their enemies powers to Heaven, whither he orders them to march. Would any gracious Prince, that loves the lives of his Subjects, give them Arms that are not fit to oppose such an enemy as comes out against them, if he knows how to furnish them with better? Nay, would he give them such weak and insufficient weapons for their defence, and then charge them to use no other? This were unworthily to send them as sheep to the Shambles, and could signifie nothing, but that he had a mind their throats should be all cut by their enemies. And doth not God himself highly commend this Sword of the Scripture to his people, when he tells *Timothy*, *It is able to make him (as a Christian) wise unto salvation, 1 Tim. 4. 15.* and as a man of God (or Minister of the Gospel) *perfect and thoroughly furnish'd unto all good works, vers. 17.* Yea, doth he not also forbid us the use of any other

weapon, than what the Scripture furnisheth us withall? *To the Law, and to the Testimony he sends us, Isa. 8.* and makes it a renouncing our Allegiance to him, to go any where else for counsel or protection than to his written Word; *Should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?* Then follows, *To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them, vers. 19, 20.* It seems then God doth not count we seek to him, except we enquire for him at the Law and the Testimony, and bring all we hear, to their test and touch. Surely, that which is intended by God to be to his people (what the Standard and Town-Bushel are to the Market) a Rule to measure all Doctrines by, is it self exact and sufficient. But the world by this time, knows where the insufficiency of the Scripture lies. Sufficient they are enough for Gods ends, but not for the Popes ends. They are able to furnish every true Christian in the world with wisdom enough how he should save his soul. But the Pope finds himself grieved, that they are not so useful to help him to save the triple Crown on his head, and do not furnish him with grounds from which he may defend the Lordly power, and God-like infallibility he claims, with other Doctrines held

forth by him. And this is the only defect he can charge the Scriptures with, to supply which, the Rabble Rout of Traditions is brought into the Church; all taught to speak the *Popes* sense before they see the light, and that Reputation may be gain'd to these unknown witnesses; this way their fine wits, with the Devils help (who owes the Scripture an old spight ever since the first Promise rescued *Adam* his Prisoner out of his hand) have taken, that the Scriptures be declared insufficient and uncertain; *Minima particula veritatis revelata*, The least particle of revealed Truth, as one of them impudently writes, and so needs

the patchery of these to make it perfect. Just as *Andronicus* served the *Emperour Alexius*, who gave out, He was weak and insufficient to govern alone, and so first got a joyn't power with him, and at last an absolute power over him to unthron him; and whether their Traditions have dealt better by the Scripture, the world may judge. When Traditions go up, the written Word is sure to go down; *Te have made void* (saith *Christ* to the *Pharisees*) *the Commandment by your Traditions*, *Mat. 15. 6.* *ἡνυψώσατε*, you have unlorded it, and supplanted its authority in the minds of men, who leave the Word to hearken to your traditions.

CHAP. XIX.

Sheweth the great wickedness of those who lift up this Sword in defence of any sin.

THirdly, This condemns those of prodigious wickedness, that instead of using this Sword to defend them against sin and Satan, lift it up audaciously for their defence in their wicked and abominable practices: Thus the Heretick, he takes up the Word to justify his corrupt tenets, forcing it, in favour of his way, to bear witness against it self. And many profane wretches we meet with, who to ward off a Reproof, will dare to seek protection for their ungodly courses, from the Word, which they have at their tongues end, and interpose to break the blow that is made at them. Tell the *Sensualist* of his voluptuous, brutish life, and you shall have him sometimes reply, *Solomon* was not so precise and scrupulous, who saith, *Eccles. 8. 15.* *A man hath no better thing under the Sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.* As if *Solomon*, yea God himself that directed his pen, meant to fill the Drunkards quaffing Cup for him, and were a Friend of Gluttons and Wine-bibbers: Whereas, to eat and drink, and be merry in *Solomons* mouth there, amounts to no more, than to serve God with gladness in the abundance of those good things which God gives us to enjoy; in the mouth of *Moses*, *Deut. 28. 47.* Such is the desperate wickedness of mans heart, that the sweetest and comfortablest portions of Scripture are most wrested by many to serve their lusts. The declarations of Gods free-grace made on purpose to melt sinners hearts, and draw them from their lusts to Christ how oft are they abused to wedge and harden them in their sins, and keep them from him! Examples of Holy mens falls Recorded, merely to make them fear that stand, and to preserve hope of mercy alive in those that have fallen, whereby they are in danger of being swallowed up with despair, how are they perverted by many, who lie like beasts wallowing in their own dung, and think all is well, because such eminent Saints fell so foully, and yet came off so fairly at last, with their sins pardoned, and souls saved! The good success that late Repentance hath now and then had in a few, yea, very few Scripture instances, it is strange to think what use and advantage Satan makes of them, to beguile the sinner, and make him linger still in the

Sodom of his sins: The eleventh Hour, saith he, is not yet come; why will you repent so long before you need? Why should he set out in the morning, who may dispatch his journey well enough an hour before night? The Penitent Thief that (as one saith) stole to Heaven from the Cross, hath, I fear, been an occasion (though on Gods part an innocent one) to bring many a sinner to the Gallows; yea, well, if not to a place of longer execution in another world! O take heed of this, sinners, as you love your souls! Is it not enough to have your lusts, but you must also fetch your encouragement from the Word, and forge Gods hand to bear you out? The Devil indeed thus abuseth Scripture, *Matth. 4. 4.* thinking thereby to make Christ more readily hearken to his cursed motion? and wilt thou tread in his steps? By this thou makest one sin two, and the last the worst. To be Drunk was a fearful sin in *Belshazzar*; but to quaff in the Bowls of the Sanctuary was far worse. No sin is little, but the least sin amounts to blasphemy when thou committest it in on a Scripture pretence. The Devil cannot easily desire a greater occasion of glorying over God, than thus to wound his Name with his own Sword. When *Julian* the Apostate saw the *Gentile Philosophers* confuted by the Humane Learning of some Christians, he said, *τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀποκαλύπτει*, We are taken by our own wings; looking upon it as a great disgrace for them to be beaten and worsted at that which they counted their own weapon. The Word is the Holy Spirits Sword. O for shame, let not Satan make his boast over thy God (Christian) by thy means, which he will, if he can persuade thee to wound his Name with this his own weapon. He that fetcheth an Argument from the Holy Scriptures to countenance any corrupt opinion or practice, what doth he but go about to make God fight against himself? He shoots at him with an Arrow out of his own Quiver: He sins, and then doth, as it were, say, God bids him do it. If there be a man on the face of the earth, that God will single out as a mark for his utmost wrath, this is he who shelters his wickedness under the Wing of the Holy Scriptures, and so makes God Patron of his sin.

Use 4. Of Exhortation. First, To bless God for furnishing us with this Sword for our defence. Secondly, To study the Word, that we make use of this weapon to defend our selves against the many potent enemies that are in the Field against us.

CHAP. XX.

An Exhortation to thankfulness for this Sword of the word, whereby we are enabled to stand on our defence against our greatest enemies.

First, Let us be excited and provoked to bless God for this Sword, with which he hath furnished us so graciously, whereby we may stand on our defence against all our bloody enemies. If a man had a Kingdom in his possession, but no Sword to keep the Crown on his Head, he could not expect to enjoy it long. This is a world, that there is no living or holding any thing we have in safety, without the help of Arms. Least of all could our souls be safe, if naked and unarmed, which are here in the mouth of danger, and can no way pass to the place of bliss and happiness in heaven prepared for them, but through their Enemies Quarters. When *Israel* took their march out of *Egypt* towards the promised Land, few or none would trust them to travel through their Countrey, but all rose up in Arms against them. The Christian will find his march much more troublesome and dangerous to Heaven: Satan is not grown tamer than he used to be; nor the wicked world better affected, than it was wont, to the people of God. O what a mercy is it, that we have this Sword by our side, which puts us out of danger from any of them all! This is in thy hand, Christian, as the Rod was in *Moses's*. What though an Army of Devils be behind thee, and a Sea of sins before thee Roaring upon thee, with this Sword, by faith wielding it, thou mayst cut thy way through the waves of the one, and set thy self out of the reach of the other. Truly, the Scripture is a mercy incomparably greater than the Sun in the Heavens: That might be better spared out of its Orb, than this out of the Church. If that were gone, we should be but knockt off our worldly business, and be only in danger to lose our bodily life, by missing our way, and stumbling on this pit, and tumbling into that pond: But if deprived of the Word salvation-work would be laid aside, or gone about to little purpose, and our souls must needs miss the right way to Happiness, and stumble inevitably upon Hell, while we think we are going to Heaven, unless a Miracle should interpose to prevent the same.

But more particularly, Bless God for these three mercies in reference to the Scripture.

First, For their translation into vulgar tongues.

Secondly, For the Ministry of the Word.

Thirdly, For the efficacy the Word and its Ministry hath had upon thy heart.

SECT. I.

First, Bless God for the Translation of the Scriptures. The Word is our sword; by being translated, the sword is drawn out of its Scabbard. What

use, alas, could a poor Christian, that hath but one tongue in his head (that understands but one language, I mean, which his Mother taught him) make of this sword when presented to him as it is sheathed in *Greek* and *Hebrew*? Truly, he might even fall a weeping with *John* at the sight of the *Sealed book*, because he could nor read in it, *Rev. 5. 4.* O bless God that hath sent, not *Angels*, but *Men*, furnished by the blessing of God on their undefatigable labours and studies, with ability to roll away the stone from the mouth of this fountain! And were it not sad to see the water of life brought to you with the expence of their spirits and strength (waited in the work) to be spilt on the ground, and basely undervalued by you, so as hardly to be put into the Catalogue of the mercies which you praise God for! O God forbid! It cannot be, if ever you had but the sweetness of any one promise in it milked out unto you, or the power of one of its Divine Truths impressed on your hearts. *Melchior Ad.* tells us that *Bugenhagius* (whom *Luther* used, with others, for his help in translating the Bible) when the Work was brought to a happy period, was so affected with the incomparable mercy therein to the Churches of Christ in *Germany*, That every year he invited his Friends to a Solemn Feast that day whereon the Work was finished, which they called, *The Feast of the Translation of the Bible*. When *Queen Elizabeth*, our *English Deborah*, opened the Prisons at her coming to the Crown (as at such times is usual to scatter Acts of Grace) one as piously as ingeniously, told her, That there were yet some good men left in Prison undeliver'd, and desired they might also partake of her Princely favour, meaning the four *Evangelists*, and *Paul*, who had been deny'd to walk abroad in the *English* tongue, when her Sister swayed the Scepter: To this she answer'd, They should be asked, Whether they were willing to have their liberty, which soon after appearing, they had their Gaol-Delivery, and have ever since had their liberty to speak to you in your own tongue at the Assemblies of your publick Worship; yea, to visit you in your own private houses also. Now is that happy day come, and long hath been, which holy *Mr. Tyndal* told a *Popish Doctor* of, when a poor *Plough-man* should be able to read the Scriptures, and allowed as freely to converse with them, as any *Doctor* of them all! A blessed day indeed it is to the souls of men. Now, Christian, when thou art Prisoner to Gods providence, and kept by his afflicting hand at Home, thou hast the Word of God to bear thee company in thy solitude; and so, though thou canst not sit up with thy brethren and sisters at thy Fathers Table in his publicke Ordinances, yet thou dost

praise
God for
his word

Luther

X

John
dal

V doſt not wholly go without thy meal; thou canſt not, it is like, carve ſo well for thy ſelf as the Miniſter uſeth to do for thee, yet it is an incomparable mercy thou haſt liberty to pick up out of the Word for thy preſent counſel and comfort, as thou art enabled by the Spirit of God upon thy humble prayer for his aſſiſtance. Admirable hath been the ſupport the Saints have found from this Holy Book in their confinements. God hath graciously ordered it, that the moſt uſeful and neceſſary Truths for afflicted Saints hang, as I may ſo ſay, on the lower boughs of this Tree of Life, within the reach of a poor Chriſtian, who is but of an ordinary ſtature in knowledge. O think, and think again, of thoſe ſad times when the bloody Sword of Perſecutors was drawn to keep off the people of God from coming near this Tree, and then you will the better conceive of your preſent Privilege: Yea, look back unto thoſe times of *Popiſh* ignorance, when this Cellar of Cordial Waters was locked up in the *Original tongues*, and not one in a whole Town to be found that had a Key, by whom poor ſouls in their fainting fits and agonies of ſpirit, could have it open'd, ſo as to come by any of their ſweet conſolations to reſtore their ſwooning ſouls; and then you will ſurely bleſs God, who hath given you ſo free an acceſs unto them, when others cannot have acceſs to you to communicate their help unto you.

S E C T. II.

for the
miniſtry
of the
word
Secondly, Bleſs God for the Miniſtry of the Word, which is the publick School he opens to his People, that in it they may learn the uſe of this their weapon. It is a ſad fruit that grows upon the little ſmattering knowledge that ſome have got from the Word, to puff them up with a conceit of their own abilities, ſo as to deſpiſe the Miniſtry of the Word as a needleſs work. The *Corinthians* were ſick of this diſeaſe which the *Apoſtle* labours to cure by a ſharp reproof, 1 Cor. 4. 8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us.* Paul, it ſeems, was no body now with theſe high Proficients; the Time was, when Paul came to Town, he was a welcome man; the ſucking child was not more glad to ſee his Mother come Home, nor could cry more earneſtly to be laid to the breaſt, than they did to partake of his Miniſtry; but now, like the child when it hath ſuckt his belly full, they bite the very Teat they ſo greedily awhile before took into their mouths, as if they ſhould never want another meal: So high did their waxen wings of Pride carry them above all thoughts of needing his Miniſtry any more. And hath not the pride of many in our days, carried them as far into a contempt of the Miniſtry of the Word, though their knowledge comes far ſhort of the *Corinthians* knowledge? Well, take heed of this ſin: *Miriam's* plague, yea a worſe, a ſpiritual ſcab and leproſie apparently cleaves to thoſe, as cloſe as a girdle to the loyns, who come once to ſcorn and deſpiſe this Ordinance, that may make all afraid to come near their Tents. What prodigious errors are they left unto, whereby God brands them? Yea, what ſenſual luſts hath the once forward profeſſion of many

among them, been quite ſwallowed up with? If once a man thinks he needs no longer go to the *Spirit's School*; he ſhall find, whoever he is, that he takes the ready way to deprive himſelf of the *Spirit's* teaching at Home: *Quench not the Spirit, deſpiſe not prophesyings,* 1 Theſ. 5. 19, 20. They are coupled together: He that deſpiſeth one, loſeth both. If the Scholar be too proud to learn of the *Uſher*, he is unworthy to be taught by the *Maſter*. But I turn to you humble ſouls, who yet ſit at the feet of Jeſus in your right minds, ſpeak the truth, and lye not, Are you not well paid for your pains? Dare you ſay of your waiting on the Miniſtry of the Word, what a wretch, though a Learned one (*Politianus* by name) ſaid of his reading the *Scripture*, That he never ſpent time to leſs purpoſe! Do you count it among your loſt time, and miſplaced hours that are beſt owed in hearing the Word? I trow not. Thou keepeſt thy acquaintance with the Word at Home if thou beſt a Chriſtian, and eaſteſt many a ſweet bit in a corner while thou art ſecretly meditating thereon, but does this content thee, or make thee think the Word preached a ſuperfluous meal? I am ſure David knew how to improve his ſolitary hours as well as another, yet in his baniſhment, O how he was pinched and hunger-bitten for want of the publick Ordinance! And ſure we cannot think he forgot to carry his Bible with him into the *Wilderneſs*, loving the Word ſo dearly as he did, *My ſoul thiſteth for thee, my ſoul longeth for thee in a dry and thiſtly Land, where no water is,* *Pſalm* 63. 1. Why David? what is the matter thou thouſt complainſt? Haſt thou not the Word to read in ſecret? Canſt thou not let down thy Bucket, and by meditation draw what thou wilt out of the Well of the Word? Why then doſt ſay thou art in a thiſtly Land where no water is? He means therefore comparatively: The ſweeteſt refreſhings he enjoy'd in his private converſe with the Word, were not comparable to what he had met in publick. And can you blame a ſick child for deſiring to ſit up with his brethren at his Fathers Table, though he is not forgot in his Chamber where he is priſoner, but hath ſomething ſent him up? It was the Sanctuary there to ſee God, his power, and glory, as of old; that David's heart longed for, and could not well live without. God threatens to bring a famine of hearing of the Word, *Amos* 8. 11. Mark, not a famine of reading the Word, but of hearing the Word. If the Word be not preached, though we have the Bible to read in at Home, yet it is a famine; and ſo we ought to judge it. *The word of the Lord was precious in thoſe days, there was no open viſion,* 1 Sam. 3. 1. The ſtrongeſt Chriſtians would find a want of this Ordinance in time: We ſee in a Town beſieged, though it be well laid in with Corn, yet when put to grind with private Hand-Mills all they ſpend, what ſtreights they are ſoon put to. And ſo will the beſt grown Saints, when they come to have no more from the Word for their ſouls to live on, than what they grind with their own private meditation and labour, then they will miſs the Miniſter, and ſee it was mercy indeed to have one whole Office it was to grind all the week for him. And if the ſtronger Chriſtian cannot ſpare this Office, becauſe yet not perfect; what ſhift ſhall

shall the weaker sort make, who need the Minister to divide the Word, as much as little children their Nurses help to mince their meat, and cut their bread for them? To leave them to their own improving the Word, is to set a whole Loaf among a company of little Babes, and bid them help themselves: Alas, they will sooner cut their fingers with the Knife, than fill their bellies with the Bread.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Bless God for the efficacy of the Word upon thy soul. Did ever its point prick thy Heart? its edge fetch blood of thy lusts, and cut off any rotten member of the body of sin? bless God for it; you would do as much to a Surgeon for lancing a sore, and severing a putrified part from thy body, though he put thee to exquisite torture in the doing of it. And I hope thou thinkest God hath done thee a greater kindness than so. Solomon tells us, *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*, Prov. 27. 6. The wounds that God thus gives, are the faithful wounds of a friend; and the kisses sin gives, come from an enemy. Gods wounds cure, sins kisses kill. The *Italians* say, that *Play, Wine, and Women, consume a man laughing*. It is true of all pleasurable sins; and as sin kills the sinner laughing, so God saves poor souls weeping and bleeding

under the wounds his word gives them. Happy soul! thou that hast made such an exchange, to get out of the enchanting arms of thy lusts that would have kissed thee to death, and to fall into the hands of a faithful God, that means thee no more hurt by all the blood he draws from thee, than the saving of thy souls life! How far mightst thou have gone, and not met with such a friend, and such a favour! There is not another Sword like this in all the world, that can cure with cutting; not another arm could use this Sword to have done thus much with it, besides the Spirit of God; The Axe does nothing till the hand of the Workman lifts it up, neither can every one, may be none else, do with his Tools what himself can. None could do such feats with Scanderbeg's Sword as himself; to be sure none can pierce the conscience, wound the spirit, and hew down the lusts that there lye skulking in their fastness, but God himself: And this he doth not for every one that reads and hears it, which still greatens thy mercy. *There were many Widows in Israel, when God sent his Prophet to her of Zarepta*. And why to her? Was there never a Drunkard, Swearer, or Unbeliever beside thee in the Congregation at the same time, that God arm'd his word to smite thee down, and graciously prick thy heart? O cry out in admiration of this distinguishing mercy, Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself to me, and not unto the world!

CHAP. XXI.

An Exhortation to the study of the Word.

Study
the word

Secondly, Let this provoke you to the study of the Word, that you may thereby have a familiar acquaintance with it. For this the Bereans obtained a mark of Honour as a Nobler sort of People than others, because they searched the Scriptures, Acts 17. Shall God leave but one book to his Churches care and study, and shall it not be read? Shall we be told there is so rich a treasure laid up in this Mine, and we continue so beggarly in our knowledge, rather than take a little pains by digging in it to come by it? The canker and rust of our gold and silver, which is got with harder labour than here is required, will rise up in judgement against many; and say, You could dredge and trudge for us that are now turned to rust and dust, but could walk over the Field of the Word where an incorruptible treasure lay, and would lose it rather than your sloth! O where is to be found, in what breast doth the Antient Zeal of former Saints to the word, lodge! Have they not counted it above Rubies and Precious Stones! Have they not trudged over Sea and Land to get the sight of it! Given the money out of their purse, the coat off their backs, to purchase a few leaves of it, and parted with their blood out of their veins, rather than forgo the treasure which they found in it! And is the Market now fallen so low, that thou desirest not acquaintance with it when it is offer'd at a far lower rate! Either they must be charged for very fools to buy the knowledge of it so dear, or you that refuse it who may have it

so cheap. But lest you should think I set you upon a needless work, you are to understand there is an indispensable necessity of Scripture-knowledge. And that is double: *Necessitas precepti*, and *necessitas medii*.

First, There is a necessity of command, *Search the Scriptures*, John 5. Indeed were there not such an express word for this duty, yet the very penning of them, with the end for which they are writ considered, would impose the duty upon us. When a Law is enacted by a Prince of State, for their Subjects to obey, the very promulgation of it is enough to oblige the people to take notice of it. Neither will it serve a Subjects turn that breaks this Law, to say he was ignorant of any such Law being in force: The publication of it bound him to enquire after it. What other end have Law-givers in divulging their Acts, but that their People might know their duty? Christ fastens condemnation on the ignorance of men where means for knowledge is afforded, *This is the condemnation, That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness*, John 3. 19. They will not know the rule, because they have no mind to walk by it. Now if ignorance of the word be condemned where its light shines, then sure he commands us to open our eyes, whereby we may let in the knowledge it sheds forth; For a Law must be transgress'd, before a condemning sentence be pronounced. It is the Heathen that shall be judged without the written word; but thou that livest

livest within its fount, shalt be judg'd by it, whether thou wilt know it or not; 2 *Thess.* 1. 8. And if thou shalt be judg'd by it, then surely thou art bound to be instructed by it: The *Jews* once had the Word deposited in their hands; *Unto them were committed the Oracles of God*: And do you think they had well discharged their trust, by locking them up safely in the Ark, and never looking into them? Surely, you cannot but think God intended another Chest, even that in their own breasts; where he principally would have them bestowed: They were committed to them, and now to us, as a dying father doth his Will and Testament to his son whom he makes his Executor, not to throw it aside among his waste papers, but carefully and curiously to read and observe it, that thereby nothing therein contained might be left unperformed: It is called *the faith delivered to the Saints*, *Jude* 3. That is, delivered to their study and care. If any of us had lived when Christ was here in the flesh, and he (when taking his farewell of the world) should have left to us some one thing in special charge to be done for his sake after he was gone to Heaven, would we not Religiously have performed the Will of our dying Saviour, as did *St. John*, to whom he left the care of his Mother, who therefore took her Home to his own House? Behold here a greater charge deposited in his Saints hands; *The Faith once delivered to them*. That is, once for all, to be by them kept and transmitted from one generation to another while this world lasts: So that if thou takest thy self to be one of the Saints number, thou art concerned with the rest, to take it Home with thee, and see that it dwells in thee richly, as becomes such a guest bequeathed by so dear a friend.

Secondly, It is necessary, *necessitate mediis*. The Word contains the whole counsel of God, for the bringing poor sinners to eternal life, and none besides this, (only as they borrow their notions out of it.) If you will not search the Scripture, and sit here at the feet of the Spirit (who fits his Scholars for Heaven by this one book) where wilt thou meet another Master? In whose works else wilt thou find the words of eternal life? *Apollos* (who was a man mighty in the Scriptures) it's said, that *Aquila* and *Priscilla* expounded to him the way of God more perfectly, *Acts* 18. 26. An Exposition pre-supposeth a Text. The meaning is, they opened the Scripture more perfectly to him. This is the way of God to lead us to God; yea, the only way: In other journeys we may miss the right way, and yet come at last to the place we intended, though not so soon; but no way will bring us to God, but this of the Word; neither can we walk in this way of God, if we be ignorant of it. A man may in other journeys be in his right way, and though he knows not he is right, may yet come safe Home. But we can have no benefit from this way of God if wholly ignorant of it, because we can do nothing in faith. O labour therefore to study this Book, though thou beest a Dunce in all besides. What is it thou wouldst learn? Is it the true knowledge of God? Thou must rumble over all the Philosophers that ever writ, and when thou hast done, not be able to frame a right notion of him.

The best of them all were but brutish in their highest knowledge of God. Indeed God left the wise world to run into a thousand follies and vanities, while they were by their own wisdom shaping a Religion to themselves; that having proved them Dunces, he might send them and the whole world to learn this Lesson in another School, and that is the Ministry of the Gospel, which is nought else but the Explication and Application of the Word, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* Wouldst thou come to the true knowledge of sin? This also is a notion to be found no where else; the Scripture alone dissects the whole body of sin, and reads to us a perfect Anatomy Lecture upon its most minute and secret parts: This discovers the ulcers of our wicked hearts which thousands dye of, and through ignorance of the Scriptures, can never come to know what their disease is. If lust comes not out in spots and sores, to be seen in the outward conversation, the Philosopher pronounceth him a clear man. The plague of the Heart, though an old disease and Epidemical, yet never was found out, or treated of, but by this Sacred Book, and this doth it fully, ye acquaint us where and from whom we got this infection: even from Adam, by whom the whole world was tainted and turn'd into a Pest-House. Which of the Wise ones of the World ever dream't of this Genealogy? Poor man, till the Scripture informs him of this, lies in the pit of sin, and knows not who threw him in! In a word, Wouldst thou be help'd out? Thou must then be beholden to the Scripture to do this kind Office for thee. Thy own Cordage is too short to reach, and too weak to draw thee thence. If thou takest not hold of this Cord of Love which God lets down unto thee in his Word, thy case is desperate. And now having set life and death before thee, I leave thee to thy choice. If yet thou beest resolved to reject the knowledge of the Almighty, and put thy soul to launch into eternity without this Chard to direct thee, not caring whether thou sinkst or swimdest, at what Port thou arrivest in the other world, Heaven or Hell: Then prepare to take up thy lodgings among the Damned, and harden thy stout heart if thou canst against those endless flames which are kindled for all those that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, 2 *Thess.* 1. And to thy terror know, that in spite of thy now wilful ignorance, thou shalt one day understand the Scriptures to the increase of thy torment; here thou shalt flout out their light, but then it will shine full on thy face, when it would give thee some ease if thou couldst forget that ever thou didst hear of such a Book as the Bible is; but then against thy will, thou shalt carry the remembrance thereof to Hell with thee, that thy scornful neglect of it on earth may be continually pouring new horror (as so much fire and brimstone) into thy guilty conscience: How must it needs then fill thee with amazement to think of thy folly and madness, to sell thy soul for a little ease and sloth! Hell from beneath will be moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming thither: It will stir up the dead for thee: and the poor Heathens, whom thou

thou shalt find prisoners there, will come flocking about thee, and with their Taunts reproaching thee, saying, *Art thou also become weak as we: Art thou become like unto us? Thou perish for thy ignorance, who hadst the Key of Knowledge at thy Girdle, and at so easie a rate mightst have been instructed in the way of life! We poor Heathens cannot bring an Action against God for false imprisonment,*

though we never heard of such a thing as the Gospel, for we did not walk up to our little light, and might have known more of God, had we not darkened our own foolish minds by rebelling against the light we had; but never were we at such cost to damn our souls as you, who have rejected the Word of God, and broke through all the threatnings and promises thereof, to come hither.

CHAP. XXII.

Several Carnal Shifts and Objections, that some bring to excuse them from the study of the Scriptures, removed.

Object. But you will say, If we had so much time to spare as others, we would not be so unacquainted with the Scriptures: But alas, we have so much business to do, and our hands so full with our worldly callings, that we hope God will excuse us, though we have not so much knowledge of his word as others.

SECT. I.

Ans. Is this thy Plea that thou indeed meanest to use when thou comest to the Bar, and art called to give thy answer to Christ thy Judge upon this matter? does not thy heart quake within thy breast, to think how he will knit his brow, and throw this thy Apology with disdain and wrath upon thy face? Did so much anger sit on the countenance of meek Jesus when on earth, and such a dreadful doom proceed from his sweet lips against those that made their Farms and Oxen as a mannerly excuse for not coming to his Supper, sentencing them never to taste thereof! O what then will glorious Christ say (when mounted on his Tribunal, not to invite, but to judge sinners) to such an excuse as this! Could God find heart and time to pen and send this Love-Letter to thee, and thou find none to read and peruse it! The sick man no time to look on his Physicians Bill! The condemned Malefactor to look on his Princes Letter of Grace, wherein his pardon is tendered to him! Poor wretch, must the world have all thy time, and swallow thee up quick! A curse not less than that of *Cirah*! Art thou such a slave to thy self, as to tie thy soul to thy purse-strings; and take no more time for the saving of thy soul, than this cruel Master will afford thee! Thou and thy money perish with thee! His soul is in an ill case which hath its allowance from so base a lust. This is so far from mending the matter, that thou dost but cover one sin with another. Who gave thee leave thus to over-lade thy self with the incumbrance of the world? Is not God the Lord of thy time? Is it not given by him, to be laid out for him? He allows thee indeed a fair portion thereof for the lower employments of this life; but did he ever intend to turn himself out of all? This is as if the Mariners, who are allowed by the Merchant some small adventure for themselves, should fill the ship, and leave no stowage for his goods that pays the freight: Will it suffice him to say, There is no room

left for his Commodities? Or as if a Servant, when his Master asks why he neglected such a business committed to his care for dispatch, should answer, He was drunk, and therefore could not do it. Why did you not read my Word, and meditate thereon? will Christ say at that day. Darest thou then be so impudent as to say, Lord, I was over-charged with the cares, and drunk with the love of the world, and therefore I could not! Well, if this be the Thief that robs thee of thy time, get out of his hands as soon as thou canst, lest it also rob thee of thy soul; The Devil can desire no greater advantage against thee; he hath thee sure enough in his Trap: He may better boast over thee, than Pharaoh could over Israel, *He is intangled, he is intangled, in the Wilderness of the World, and shall not escape my hands.* If a friend should tell you, that you kept so many Servants and Retainers as would beggar you, would you not listen to his counsel, and rather turn them out of doors, than keep them still to eat you out of them? And wilt thou not be as careful of thy soul? Wilt thou keep such a rout of worldly occasions, as will eat up all thoughts of God and Heaven? Certainly, thou must either discharge thy self of these, or else fairly dismiss thy hope of salvation. But why should I speak so much to these? This ordinarily, is but a cover to mens sloth: if they had hearts, they would find time to converse with the Word in the greatest throng of their worldly occasions: These can find time to eat and sleep, to sport and recreate themselves, but no time for God and his Word: would they but allow their souls those broken ends of time to search the Scripture, which they spend in pastimes, idle visits, reading of empty Pamphlets, it would not be long but they might give a happy account of their proficiency in their spiritual knowledge. What calling more incumbering than a Souldiers? And of all Souldiers the Generals, to whom all resort? Such a one was Joshua, yet a strict command given him to study the Scripture, *Joshua 1. 8. This book shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.* Must Joshua, in the midst of Drums and Trumpets, and distractions of war, find time to meditate on the Law of God? And shall thy shop or plough, a few trivial occasions in thy private calling, discharge thee from the same duty? Dost thou think that the Closet is such an enemy to thy shop? and the time spent with God, a Thief to thy temporal estate?

estate? God, I am sure, intends his People better; as appears in the former place, *Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

SECT. II.

Parents *Object.* 2. But I cannot read, how can I search the Scriptures?

Ans. It is sad, I confess, that Parents, who are Gods Trustees, to whom the Nurture of their children is committed, should take no more care for their souls, than the *Ostridge* doth of her Eggs, not caring what becomes of them. What doth these but throw them into the Devils mouth, by sending them out into a sinful world without the knowledge of God and his Word, to become a prey to every lust that meets them! To Hell they must needs swim, if God shew no more pity to them, than their bloody Parents have done! But shall thy Parents negligence be a Plea for thy ignorance? Wilt not thou be merciful to thy self, because they were cruel? in the fear of God be perswaded to supply their defect by thy diligence. I hope thou dost not think it a shame to learn that now thou art old, which thou shouldst have been taught when thou wert young. Had not thy Parents learnt thee a Trade to get thy temporal living, wouldst thou therefore have lived a beggar, rather than have applied thy self (though late) to some Calling? There are many for thy encouragement, who have begun late, and by Gods blessing on their diligence, have conquered the difficulty of the work. If thou wert in prison, thou hadst rather learn to read thy neck-verse, than lose thy life for want thereof. Now though ability to read the Word be not of absolute necessity for the salvation of thy soul, yet knowledge of its saving truths is, and few better private means to obtain this than reading: but if thou beest not capable of this, thou hast not by it an excuse for thy ignorance so long as thou hast an ear to receive instruction from others. As God sometimes recompences the defect of one sense with the quickness of another; so may be thou shalt find thy inability to read supplied with a tenacious memory, to hold what thou hearest read or preach'd unto thee; some *Martyrs* we find mighty in the Scriptures, able to defend the truth against Learned Doctors, and yet not Book-learned: One amongst the rest, who could not read, yet carried always some part of the Scripture about him, and when he met any Christian that could, he would get him to read some portion or other thereof unto him; whereby he attained to such a measure of knowledge and faith, as made him wiser than his enemies, and a stout Champion for the Truth even to resist to blood.

SECT. III.

Object. 3. O but, saith a third, Though I can read, yet I am of so weak an understanding, that I fear I shall make no work with such deep mysteries as are there contained.

Ans. Take heed this Objection comes not from thy sluggish heart, which gets this fair pretence to

ease thee of a duty thou fearest will be troublesome unto thee. Didst thou ever make a tryal, and set about the work conscientiously, using all means that might conduce towards thy instructing in the mind of God? If not, lay not the blame on thy weak head, but wicked heart. When thou went'st first to be an Apprentice, what skill had'st thou in thy Trade? Did'st thou therefore despair, and run away? No, but by thy diligence didst learn the mystery of it in a few years, so as to maintain thy self comfortably upon it; and will not thy industry to learn that, condemn thy sloth in not studying the Word, which is able to bring in a better livelihood to thy soul, than thy Trade can do for thy body?

But poor soul, if what thou say'st indeed ariseth from the deep sense thou hast of thy own weakness, then ponder upon this twofold encouragement.

First, God is able to interpret his own Word unto thee. Indeed none can enter into the knowledge thereof, but he must be beholden unto his Spirit to unlock the Door. If thou hadst a ripper head and higher parts than thou canst now pretend to, thou wouldst without his help, be but like the blind *Sodomites* about *Lot's House*, groping, but not able to find the way into the true saving knowledge thereof. He that hath not the right Key, is as far from entering the House, as he that hath none, yea in some sense further off; for he that hath none, will call to him that is within, while the other, trusting to his false Key, stands pottering without to little purpose. The *Pharisees*, who were so conversant in the Scriptures, and obtained the name for the admired *Doctors* of the *Chair*, called, *2 Cor. 2. 8. The Princes of the World*, because so Renowned and Adored among the people; yet even these mis'd that truth which lay before them almost in every leaf of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, whom they were, in their every-days study, tumbling over: I mean that grand truth concerning Christ, of whom both *Moses* and the *Prophets* speak. And at the same time the People whom they counted so base, yea, accursed, as those that understood not the Law, could see Him whom they mis'd. None so knowing, that God cannot blind and insatiate; none so blind and ignorant, whose eyes his Spirit cannot open. He who by his incubation upon the waters at the Creation hatcht that rude mass into the beautiful form we now see, and out of that dark Chaos made the glorious Heavens, and garnisht them with so many Orient Stars, can move upon thy dark soul, and enlighten it, though now it be as void of knowledge, as the Evening of the Worlds first day was of Light. The Schoolmaster sometimes sends home the child, and bids his father put him to another Trade, because not able, with all his Art to make a Scholar of him: But if the Spirit of God be the Master, thou shalt learn, though a very Dunce, *Psal. 119. 130. The entrance of thy Word giveth light: It giveth understanding to the simple.* No sooner is a soul entred into the Spirits School, but he becomes a proficient: Thence we are commanded to encourage those that discourage themselves, *Isa. 35. 3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.* Why? what good news

news shall we tell them? *The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; vers. 5. An high way shall be there, and shall be called, The way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the way saving men, though fools shall not err therein.*

Secondly, The deeper sense thou hast of thy own weakness, the more fit thou art for the Spirits teaching: A proud Scholar, and an humble Master, will never agree; *Christ is humble, and lowly, and so*

resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Though he cannot brook him that is proud, yet he can bear with thee that art weak and dull, if humble and diligent; as we see in the Disciples, whom our Saviour did not disdain to teach the same lesson over and over again, till at last they say, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, Joh. 16. 29.* The Eunuch was no great Clerk when in his Chariot he was reading *Isaiah's* Prophecie, yet because he did it with an honest heart, Philip is dispatcht to instruct him.

CHAP. XXIII.

containeth four Directions to the Christian in the use of this Sword, for his defence against the first enemy fore-mentioned, viz. the Persecutor.

Quest. BUT haply some may say, You have said enough to let us know how necessary a weapon this Sword is to defend our souls, and of what admirable use in all the conflicts that the Christian hath with any of his enemies. But we hope you will not leave us thus; It is a word of Counsel we now listen to hear from you, how we poor Christians may wield and use this Sword for our own defence, and the vanquishing of the several enemies, whose approach you have alarm'd us to expect; some whereof we already, to our great terror, see in the field against us, and how soon the other may appear, we know not. What will a Sword by our side, a Bible in our hand, yea, mouth, do us good, if we be not instructed how we may ward off their blows, and make them feel the impressiō of ours therewith?

Ans. Your request is reasonable, and for your better satisfaction, I shall sort the Directions to the several kinds of enemies you have to grapple with; for their assaults being of a different nature, do require a resistance suitable to their way of fight.

SECT. I.

We shall begin with the Persecutor. Now wouldst thou Christian, stand the shock of his furious assault, when he hangs out his bloody flag, breathing slaughter to the Church and Flock of Christ, if they will not let him trample upon all their glory, by defiling their consciences, and renouncing the Faith at the lust of his imperious command. Then

First, Let it be thy first care to get Scripture-grounds for those principles and practices of thine, which stir up the Persecutors rage against thee. A man had need be well assured of that which brings his life and dear enjoyments (that go all away with it) into hazards. It is enough to weaken the courage of a valiant man, to fight in a Mist, when he cannot well discern his foes from his friends: And to be a damp upon the Christians Spirit in a suffering hour, if he be not clear in his judgement, and fixed in his principles that he is to suffer for: Look therefore to put that out of question in thy own thoughts, for which the Persecutor calls thee into question. And the rather, because it ever was, and still will be

the policy of Persecutors, to disfigure what they can the beautiful face of those Truths and Practices for which the Servants of Christ suffer, that they may put a colour of justice upon their bloody cruelties, and make the world believe they suffer as evil doers. Now thou wilt never be able to bear up under the weight of this their heavy charge, except thou beest fully perswaded in thy own conscience, that thou sufferest for righteousness sake. But if thou standst clear in thy own thoughts concerning thy cause, thou wilt easily wipe off the dirt they throw upon thee, and sweetly entertain thy self with the comfort which thy own conscience will bring to thee through the reproaches of thy enemies. *Nemo est miser sensu alieno, saith Salvian, What others say or think of us makes not miserable: One reproof from a mans own thoughts wounds more than the reproaches do of all the world besides.* When the *Thessalonians* were once satisfied of the certain truth of *Paul's* Doctrine, *For the Gospel* (it is said) *came to them in much assurance, Ep. 1. chap. 1. v. 5.* then they could open their door with joy to receive it, though affliction and persecutions come along with it, *vers. 6.*

SECT. II.

Secondly, Improve those Scriptures which teach us to dread God more, and fear man less. Every man is most loth to fall into his hands whom he fears most: So that if God hath once gained the Supremacy of thy fear, thou wilt rather skip into the hottest fire the Persecutor can make, than make God thy enemy: *Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy Word, Psalm 119. 161.* David had put it seems mans wrath, and that which God threatens in his Word, into the Scales, and finding Gods hand to be without compare the heavier, trembles at that, and ventures the worst that the other can do against him. Hence it is the Scripture is so much in depressing the power of man, that we may not be scared at his big looks or threats; in depressing the power of man, and representing his utmost rage to be so contemptible and inconsiderable a thing, as none that knows who God is, needs fear the worst he can do; *Cease ye from man, whose*

breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? *Isa. 2. 22. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell, Mat. 10. 28. Pueri timent Larvas, sed non timent ignem.* Children are afraid of Bug-bears, that cannot hurt them, but can play with fire that will burn them; and no less childish is it to be frightened into a sin at the frowns of a sorry man, who comes forth with a Vizard of seeming dread and terror, but hath no power to hurt us more than our own fear gives him, and to play with Hell fire into which God is able to cast us for ever. Truly, this is to be scared with painted fire in the picture, and not in the Furnace where it really burns. What was *John Hus* the worse for his Fools Cap that his enemies put on his head, so long as under it he had a Helmet of Hope which they could not take off? Or how much the nearer Hell was the same Blessed Martyr for their committing his soul to the Devil? No nearer than some of their own wicked Crue are to Heaven, for being Sainted in the Popes Calendar. *Melanchthon* said, Some are *Anathema Secundum Dicit*, as *Luther*, and other faithful Servants of Christ, whom the Pope cursed. But what saith *David*? *Psal. 109. 28. Let them curse, but bless thou.* He that hath God's good word, needs not fear the worlds bad. The Dogs barking doth not make the Moon change her colour: Nor needs the Saint change his countenance for the rage of his Persecutors.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Be sure thou givest up thy lusts to the Sword of the Spirit, before thy life is in any danger from the Sword of the Persecutor. He is not likely to be free of his flesh for Christ, when called to suffer at mans hand, that is dainty of his lusts, and cannot bear the edge of the Spirits Sword, when he comes to mortifie them. Canst thou be willing to lay down thy life for Christ, and yet keep an enemy in thy bosom out of the hand of Justice, that seeks to take away the life of Christ? Persecutors tempt, as well as torture, *Heb. 11.* They promise the honours of the Court, as well as threaten the hardship of the Prison, and cruelty of the devouring fire. Now if thy love to the world be not mortified, it is easie to tell what choice thou wilt make, even the same that *Demas* did, thou wilt embrace the present World, and leave Christ in the plain field. Or if thou shouldst, through a natural stoutness, bear up under sufferings, even to give thy body to be burnt, rather than renounce the true Religion thou professest, yet if any lust should at last be found to have been foster'd by thee, thou shalt have no more thanks at Christs hands, than he who in the Law offered up an unclean Beast to God. It is possible for one to die in the Cause of Christ, and not be his Martyr. Thy heart must be holy thou sufferest with, as well as the Cause holy thou sufferest for. Thy behaviour must be gracious in suffering, as well as the Cause just that brings thee to suffer. He alone is Christ Martyr, that suffers for Christ, as Christ himself suffered: For he hath not only left us his Truth to maintain to blood, when

called thereunto, but his example to follow also in our sufferings, *1 Pet. 2. 21. If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently: this is acceptable with God, for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not, &c.* This is hard work indeed, in the very fire to keep the spirit cool, and clear of wrath and revenge, towards those that throw him so unmercifully into the devouring flames! But it makes him, that by grace from above can do it, a glorious Conqueror. Flesh and blood would bid a man call for fire from Heaven, rather than mercy to fall upon them that so cruelly handle them. He that can forgive his enemy, is too hard for him, and hath the better of him. Because his enemies blows do but bruise his flesh, but the wounds that Love gives, pierce the soul and conscience. *Saul* was forced to confess that *David* persecuted so furiously by him, was the better man, *Thou art more righteous than I, 1 Sam. 24. 17.* And the People went from the Execution of Christ, whom they were so mad to have Crucified, sick of what they had done, shaking their heads, as if all were not right they had done against so good a man, *Luke 23.* Now when two Contraries are in a Contest, That overcomes which preserves its own nature, and turns the other into some likeness unto it self; as we see Fire transfuseth its own heat into the Water, forcing it to assimilate and yield to it. Thus a holy, charitable spirit, by forgiving an enemy, if it doth not prevail to turn his enemies heart to him in love, yet then it turns his enemies Conscience against himself, and forceth him to condemn himself, and justifie him whom he persecutes wrongfully.

SECT. IV.

Fortifie thy Faith on those promises which have an especial respect to such a condition. *This is the Saints victory over the world, even their Faith.* Thus *David*, when *Saul* seem'd to have him under his foot, and had driven him from living in a Court, to earth himself for his safety in a Cave of the Wilderness, yet by Faith triumphed over his proud enemy, and sung as pleasantly in his grot and earth-hole, as the merriest bird in the Wood, *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise, Ps. 56.* *Saul* had his body higher sed, but not his heart fixed as *David's* was; and therefore could not sing to *David's* tune. A thousand thoughts and fears distracted his head and heart, while *David* lives without fear and care, even when his enemies are in the field a hunting for his life. Faith on the promise will, like the Widows oyl, not only set thee out of debt to all Worldly fears and cares which by thy troubles thou maist contract, but afford thee enough to live comfortably besides, yea with joy unspeakable and glorious.

There are two sorts of sorrows that do usually distress gracious souls most in their sufferings for Christ.

First, First they are prone to be troubled for their own persons and private affairs.

Secondly, For the cause of Christ which they bear testimony

testimony unto, lest that should miscarry.

Now there is abundant provision laid up in the promises to ease the Christians heart of both these burthens.

First, Acquaint thy self with those promises that concern thy self as a sufferer for Christ, and see where any crevice is left unstopt (if thou canst) that may let in the least air of suspicion in thy mind to disturb thy peace, and discompose thy joy. The Promises are so many, and fitted so exactly to every particular Query of which the soul can desire satisfaction, that it will require thy study and diligenceto gather them. God having chose rather to scatter his promises here and there promiscuously, than to sort them, and set every kind in a distinct knot by themselves, we may think, on purpose, that we might be drawn into an acquaintance with the whole Scripture, and not leave any one corner unsearch'd, but curiously observe it from one end to the other. And let not the present peace of the Church, cause thee to think it needless work. The Apothecary gathers his simples in Summer, which haply he may not use while Winter: And how soon Persecution may arise, thou knowest not: The Church ever hath had, and shall have its vicissitudes of Summer and Winter; yea, sometimes Winter strikes in before it is looked for, and then who is the man most likely to be offended? Surely, he that received the Word with joy in the prosperous estate of the Church, but laid not in for foul weather. Well, what is thy fear? whence comes thy discouragement? Art thou scared with the noylomness of the Prison? or doth the terror of the fire, and torture of the Rack, affright thee? Know for thy comfort, if thy strength be too weak to carry thee through them, thou shalt never be called to such hot service, and hard work. The Promise assures thee as much, *He will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able,* 1 Cor. 10. 12. God who gives the Husbandman his discretion with what instrument to thresh his Corn, as it is harder or softer; will not let the Persecutors Wheel come upon thee that art not able to bear it. God gives us this very account why he led his People the further way about (at their first coming out of Egypt) rather than by the Land of the Philistines (the far shorter cut of the two) *Exodus 13. 17. For God said, Lest peradventure the People repent when they see War, and return to Egypt.* See here, God considers their weakness, they cannot yet bear War, and therefore they shall not be tryed with it, till more hardned for it. But if thou beest called into the Field to encounter with these bloody fiery tryals, the Promise takes the whole care and charge of the War off thy hands; *When they deliver you up, take no thought (that is, disquieting, distrustful) how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, Matth. 10. 17.* And *vers. 20. It is the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* There is no mouth that God cannot make eloquent: no back so weak, which he cannot make strong. And he hath promised to be with thee wherever thy enemies carry thee, fire and water shall not part thee from his sweet company. These promises make so soft a pillow for the Saints heads, that they have profest, many of them, never to have lain at more ease than when

most cruelly handled by their merciless enemies. One Dates his Letter *from the delectable Orchard his Prison*; another subscribes her self, *Your loving Friend, as merry as one bound for Heaven.* They have been so far from pitying themselves in their sufferings, that their chief sorrow hath been, that they could be no more thankful for them. And whence had they their strength? Where drew they their joy? Had they not both from the Spirit, applying the Promises to them?

Secondly, As for the trouble thou put'st thy self to concerning the Cause and Church of Christ, which thou may'st see at any time distressed by the enemy, though God takes thy good-will to them (from which those thy fears arise) very kindly, yet there is no need of tormenting thy self with that which is sure never to come to pass. The Ark may shake, but it cannot fall: The ship of the Church may be tossed, but it cannot sink, for Christ is in it, and will awake time enough to prevent its Wrack: There is therefore no cause for us, when the storm beateth hardest upon it, to disturb him, as once the Disciples did with the shrieks and out-cries of our unbelief, as if all were lost. Our Faith is more in danger of sinking at such a time, than the Cause and Church of Christ are. They are both by the promise set out of the reach of Men and Devils. The Gospel is an *Everlasting Gospel*, *Rev. 14. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one iota of this shall perish, Matth. 5. The Word of the Lord endureth for ever, 1 Pet. 1. 23.* and shall be alive to walk over all its enemies graves, yea to see the Funeral of the whole world, when at the great day of the Lord, it must be everlastingly buried in its own ruins. And for the Church, that is built upon a Rock impregnable, *The gates of Hell shall never prevail against it, Matth. 16.* It hath been oft in the Sea, but never drown'd; seldom out of the fire, but never consumed; sometimes swallowed up to reason, but like *Jonah* in the *Whales* belly, cast up again, as too heavy a charge for the strongest stomach that ever Persecutor had to digest. The Faith of this hath carried the Blessed Martyrs to the grave, when they swam to it in their own blood with joy, because they knew the Church should have the Day at last, and that they left others behind in pursuit of the victory on earth, while themselves were taken out of the field, to triumph in Heaven: Yea, some by *Prophetic* Spirit, have fore-told the very time when the persecuted Truths, that were then buried with so much ignominy and scorn, should have a happy Resurrection and Victory over their proud enemies. Thus *John Huss* cited his enemies to answer him a hundred years after, comforting himself, That though they then burnt the Goose (alluding to his own name) a Swan would come in his stead, that should fill the air with his sweet singing, which was fulfilled in *Luther*, whose Doctrine went far and near, and charmed the hearts of multitudes every where. And *Hiltenius* another *German Divine*, alleviated the miseries he endured in his stinking Prison (where he died for rubbing the *Monks* sores too hard) with this, That another, naming the very time, 1516. should arise after him that would ruine the *Monks Kingdom* (whose abuses he had but gently reproved) and that they should

should not be able to resist his power, nor so much as falten and chain upon him; which came to pass in Luther; for, to a Miracle, he was kept out of the hands of his bloody enemies, though never man's blood more thirsted for.

CHAP. XXIV.

Directions to the Christian, how to make use of the Sword of the Word for his defence against errors and Seducers.

Secondly; The second enemy that comes forth against the Christian, is the Heretick or Seducer, who is so much more to be feared than the former, by how much it is worse to part with Gods Truth, than our own life; to be corrupted in our minds, than to be tortured in our members: In a word, to have our souls damned by God; than our bodies killed by man. If the *Martyrs* had fear'd death more than Heresie, they would not have leapt into the Persecutors flames, rather than consent to their Doctrine. Now that thou mayst be able to lift up this Sword of the Spirit (the only Weapon to defend thee) with victory against this dangerous enemy; Apply thy self in the use of the best means with thy utmost care to find out the true sense and meaning of the Spirit in his Word. This Sword in anothers hand, will not defend thee: No, it must be in thy own; or else thou canst not have the benefit of it. The phrase and outward expression are but the shell, the sense and meaning is the Pearl, which thou like a wife Merchant, shouldst seek for. To tumble over a Chapter, and not to reach the mind of God therein held forth, and to mumble over a prayer in an unknown tongue, are both alike. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches, Rev. 2. 7.* We are to listen what the Spirit saith in the Word as we hear or read it. And he that hath an ear for the Spirit, will not have an ear for the Seducer.

Now to help thee in thy search after the sense and meaning of the Word, These directions I hope may stand thee in some stead.

SECT. I.

First, Take heed thou comest not to the Scriptures with an unholy heart. If ever you know the mind of God in his Word, the Spirit must impart it to you. And will he that is so holy, take thee by thy foul hand, thinkest thou, to lead thee into Truth? No, thy doom is set, *Dan. 12. The wicked shall not understand.* The Angel, who took Lot's Daughters into the House, smote the *Sodomites* with blindness, that they might grope for the door, but not find it. And so are those like to be served, that come with unclean hearts to the Word. *Without are dogs.* Not only without Heaven at last, but without the true knowledge of God on Earth. The wicked have the Word of God, but the Holy Soul hath the mind of Christ, *1 Cor. 2. 16.* Therefore the same Apostle exhorts us, that we be not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, that ac-

ceptable and perfect Will of God, *Rom. 12. 2.* And what amounts this to, but if we will have Truth for our guest, and be acquainted with the Mind and Will of God, we must prepare a holy heart for its lodging? They commonly are taken captive by Seducers, who were before Prisoners to their lust, *2 Tim. 3. 6, 7.* And lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. When David would beg understanding in the Word, he makes his purpose for a Holy life, the Argument with which he urgeth God, *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart, Psal. 119. 33, 34.*

SECT. II.

Secondly, Make not thy own reason the Rule by which thou measurest Scripture-Truths. Is that fit to try the Revelations of the Word by, which is dunced and pozed with so many secrets in Nature? Doth not the Word reveal such things to us, as are not only above sense, (*for eye hath not seen them, nor ear heard them;*) but also above the Ken of Reason? being such as never entered into the heart of man, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* Indeed the whole Systeme of Gospel-Truths speaks in a foreign and Out-landish tongue to Reason: It can make no sense of them, except Faith be the Interpreter. The Scriptures are like the Red Sea, through which the *Israelites* by faith passed safely, but the *Egyptians* attempting to do it, for want of that Guide, were drowned. A humble believer passeth through the deep mysteries of the word safely, without plunging into any dangerous mistakes; whereas those sons of Pride, who leave Faith, and take Reason for their Guide, we see how they are drowned in many damnable errors, *Arrianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism*, and what not? The most dangerous errors fathered upon the Scriptures, have sprung from this womb. This was the *Sadduces* ground on which they went, for their denying the Resurrection of the Dead. They owned the book of *Moses* for the Word of God, and yet denied the Resurrection asserted therein, because it seem'd so impossible a thing to their Reason, that our bodies after so many alterations into slime and dust, should stand up in life: this their Reason laughed at; for so our *Saviour's* answer plainly shews, *Mat. 22. 29. Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

SECT.

Reason & Faith

SECT. III.

Thirdly, When thou consultest with the Word, take heed thou comest not with a judgement pre-engaged to any party and opinion. He is not like to hold the Scales even, whose judgement is bribed before-hand. A distemper'd eye sees the object of that colour with which it self is affected; and a mind pre-possess'd, will be ready to impose its own sence upon the Word, and so loseth the Truth by an overweening conceit of his own opinion. Too many, alas, read the Scriptures not so much to be informed by them, as confirmed in what already they have taken up! They choose opinions, as *Sampson* his Wife, because they please them, and then come to gain the Scriptures consent. Thus the *Jews* first made up the match with their *Idols*, and then ask counsel of God what they should do, *Ezek. 14. 4.* It is a just judgement of God, that such should not see Truth when it lies fair before them, but be given up to an injudicious heart, to believe the Word favours their fancies, and chimes as they think, *vers. 4, 5.* *The Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his Idols: That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart.* And when is a man taken in his own heart, if not when insnared in the fancies and follies which his erroneous mind hath weaved?

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Go to God by prayer for a Key to unlock the mysteries of his Word. It is not the plodding, but the praying soul that will get this Treasure of Scripture-knowledge. Saint *John* got the Sealed book opened by weeping, *Rev. 5. 5.* God oft brings a Truth to the Christians hand as a return of prayer, which he had long hunted for in vain with much labour and study; *There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets*, *Dan. 2. 22.* And where doth he reveal the secrets of his Word, but at the Throne of grace? From the first day (saith the Angel) that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words, i.e. for thy prayer, *Dan. 10. 12.* And what was this heavenly Messengers Errand to *Daniel*, but to open more fully the Scripture to him? as appears by *ver. 14.* compared with *vers. 21.* This holy man had got some knowledge by his study in the Word, and this sets him a praying, and prayer fetcht an Angel from heaven to give him more light. If ever we know the mind of God, we must be beholden to the Spirit of God for it; When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will lead you into all truth, *Joh. 16.* And the Spirit is the fruit of Christs intercession, *I will pray the Father, and he will send the Comforter, &c.* Now there must be a concurrence of our prayers with his intercession. While our High Priest is offering incense within the Vail, we are to be praying without for the same that he is interceding within.

Now to quicken thee up to pray with more fervent importunity for this manuduction of the Holy Spirit to lead thee into Truth,

First, Let the dread of those Scriptures, which set forth the danger of errors and false Doctrines, fall upon thee, that thou may'st not think thou goest upon a slighty errand, when praying to be preserved from them, as if the odds were not great, whether thou hast thy request, or hast it not. It is one of the Devils Master-policies, by sinking the price of Errours in the thoughts of men to make them thereby the more vendible. Many think, they shall not pay so dear for an Errour in judgement, as for a Sin in practice: Yea, some have such a latitude, that they fancy a man may be saved in any Religion. A principle that must needs tend to make them that hold it, careless and incurious in their choice. That sin shall not want Customers, which men think they shall pay little or nothing for. Some can be content to be drunk on free-coft, that would not, were they assured their own purse should pay soundly for the Reckoning. How comes Fornication to abound so much among the *Romish Clergy*, but because it is counted so petty a sin by them? And I wish that Errour and Heresie (which are the Fornication of the mind) were not by many among our selves sized as low. But woe be to those Clerks of the Devils Market, that tempt and toll men on to sins by setting cheaper Rates on their Head, than the Word of God hath done. If once the dread of a sin be worn off the conscience, no wonder then if we see men as boldly leap upon it, as the Frogs in the Fable on the Log, that lay so still and tame at the bottom of the River. Fear makes the body more apt to take infection, but it preserveth the soul from the infection of sin.

Now that thou may'st the more stand in fear of drinking in the poyson of any corrupt and unsound Doctrine, let thy mind ponder on a few Scriptures, which shew both the detestable, and also damning nature of them, *Gal. 5. 19.* there Heresie is called a work of the flesh, and reckoned among those sins which shut the doers of them out of Heaven; They which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, *verse 21.* They are called Doctrines of Devils, *1 Tim. 3. 1.* And if they come from the Devil, whither must they lead but to Hell? Such as are against the fundamental principles of the Gospel, are inconsistent with the love and favour of God. 2. *Epist. of John.* He that abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God. And who, think you, shall have him that hath not God? Were there no other Scripture to be produced against this kind of sin, but that one, *2 Pet. 2. 2.* it were enough to strike the Heretick through his loyns, and make the knees of every Seducer like *Belshazzar's* at the sight of the hand-writing on the Wall, to knock one against the other; There shall be false Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. So that if a man hath a mind to get the start of other sinners, and desires to be in Hell before them, he need do no more, but open his sails to the wind of Heretical Doctrine, and he is like to make a short Voyage to Hell of it; for these bring upon their Maintainers Swift Destruction. Nay, the Spirit of God, the more to aggravate their deplo-

red state, brings in three most dreadful instances of Divine vengeance that ever was executed upon any sinners, viz. The destruction of the *Apostate Angels* from Heaven to Hell, The Drowning of the *Old World*, And the Conflagration of *Sodom and Gomorrah* by raining Hell (as it were) out of Heaven upon them. I say, he brings these as patterns and pledges of that vengeance which shall certainly befall this kind of sinners. And by this time I hope thou wilt be warm in thy prayer against this dangerous enemy. But

Secondly, When thou hast thus possess'd thy heart with the dread of being led into any corrupt opinion, then strengthen thy faith from those comfortable *Scriptures* which assure thee, that no sincere Saint shall be left to fall finally into any soul-damning Error. Christ is as able for, and faithful in his *Prophetic* and *Kingly Offices*, as his *Priestly*. Surely he will not have the least care of his Peoples Understanding, which is Guide to their whole man, and is that faculty which he first practiseth upon in the work of *conversion*. Thou hast therefore as strong ground to believe he will preserve thee from damnable principles, as damnable practices. It would be little advantage to be kept from one enemy, and left open to the will and power of another. Christs Hedge comes round about his People. Solomon tells us, *The mouth of a strange Woman is a deep Pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein*, Prov. 14. 22. And so is the mouth of the Seducer who comes with strange Doctrines, whorish opinions. Now who is this Pit digged for? Indeed if we look at Satans design, it is a trap chiefly laid to catch the Saint; he would, if possible, deceive the very *Elect*. His greatest ambition is to spread his Banners in this Temple of GOD, and defile them whom God hath washed. But if we eye Gods intention, it is a Pit he suffers to be made for Hypocrites and false Gospellers, such who never would heartily close with Christ and his Truth; these are they whom God abhors, and therefore left by him to become a prey to these that go a-birding for souls with their corrupt Doctrines; 2 *Thess.* 2. 10, 11. *Because they received not the love of the Truth that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* These like the out-setting Deer are shot, while they within the Pale are safe: Or like the *Suburbs* taken by the enemy, but those within the City escape their fury. It is the outward Court, Rev. 11. 2. that is left to be trampled under foot. And in the fore-quoted place of the *Epistle* to the *Thessalonians*, though he gives up Hypocrites to be deceived by false teachers, as once *Ahaz* by those *Knights of the Post* his false Prophets, yet verse 13. he speaks comfortably to the *Elect*, and shews, that the same Decree which appointed them to salvation, provided also for their embracing the Truth, as the necessary means leading thereunto; *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God from the beginning, hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of*

the Spirit, and belief of the Truth. And if God hath got possession of the Head by his Truth, and of the Heart by his sanctifying grace, he will keep them out of Satans clutches. Go therefore, and plead the promise for thy preservation: The promise improved by faith at the Throne of Grace, will be thy best Antidote in these times of general infection. Never fear speeding when the promise bids thee go and prosper. The mercy is granted before thou askest it; only God will have thee by prayer lay thy claim to it, before thou beest possessed of it. And for thy help I have set down some sweet promises of this Nature, with which, if thou acquaintest thyself, thou mayst be furnish'd both with grounds for thy Faith, and Arguments for thy Prayer in this case, *Mat.* 24. 24. *Joh.* 7. 12. *Joh.* 10. 5, 29. 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *Phil.* 3. 15. 1 *Joh.* 2. 19, 20.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Compare Scripture with Scripture. False Doctrines, like false Witnesses, agree not among themselves. Their name may be called *Legion*, for they are many. But Truth is one, it is Homogenous: One Scripture sweetly Harmonizeth with another. Hence it is, though there were many *Pen-men* of Sacred Writ, and those of several Ages one after another, yet they all are said to have but one mouth, *Luk.* 1. 70. *As he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the world began.* All had one mouth, because they accord so perfectly together. The best way therefore to know the mind of God in one Text, is to lay it to another. The *Lapidary* useth one Diamond to cut another, so should we one place of Scripture to interpret another. *Scriptures* compared, like Glasses set one against another, cast a light each to other; *Nehem.* 8. 8. *They (i. e. the Levites) read in the book of the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* Et exponendo sensum dabant intelligentiam per Scripturam ipsam. So Tremelius reads the words, They gave them the meaning of what they read by the Scripture it self. Now in comparing Scripture with Scripture, be careful thou interpretest obscure places by the more plain and clear, and not the clear by the dark. Error creeps into the most shady obscure places, and there takes Sanctuary. Some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned wrest. No wonder they should stumble in those dark and difficult places, when they turn their back of that light which plain Scriptures afford to lead them safely through; He that is born of God, sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and that the wicked one toucheth him not, 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. This is a dark place, which some run away with, and from it conclude there is a perfect state free from all sin attainable in this life: Whereas a multitude of plain Scriptures testify against such a conclusion, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. *Prov.* 20. 9. *Eccles.* 7. 20. *Joh.* 9. 20. *Phil.* 3. 12. 1 *Joh.* 1. 8, 9, 10. with many more. So that it must be in a limited and qualified sense, That he that is born of God sins not: he sins not finally, or comparatively, not as the carnal wretch doth: And the wicked one toucheth him not; i. e. *Non*

*Nonnulli qualitates, as Cajetan saith. Not so as to transfuse his own nature and disposition into him, as the fire toucheth the Iron or Wood it comes near, assimilating them to its own nature. This Rule of using plain Scriptures to be a Key for to unlock obscure, will hold in all other instances. And blessed be God, though to tame our pride he hath inserted some knotty passages, yet the necessary saving Truths are of easie access even to the weakest understanding. *Salubriter Spiritus Sanctus ita Scripturas Sanctas modificavit, ut locis aperientibus fami accurreret; obscurioribus fastidia detingeret.* Aug. de Doc. Ch. lib. 2. c. 6. There is enough in the plain places of Scripture to keep the weak from starving, and in the obscure to lift them above contempt of the strongest.*

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, (Consult with thy faithful Guides, which God hath set over thee in his Church. Though people are not to pin their faith on the Ministers thereof, yet they are to seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 2. 7. Christ directs his Kids for their safety, that they turn not aside into by-paths of error, and fall not into the hands of false Teachers (those cheating companions) *that they go forth by the foot-steps of the flock, and feed beside the Shepherds Tents.* Cant. 1. 8. The Devil knows too well; Send away the Shepherd, and he may soon catch the sheep. And these times prove fully, that he is not mistaken. When were peoples affections more withdrawn from their Ministers? And when were their judgements more poisoned with error? Of what sort, I pray, are those, that have been trapped into dangerous errors in our late unhappy times? Have they not most this brand upon them? Are they not such who would sooner hearken

to a stranger (may be a Jesuite in a Buff-coat, of with a Blew Apron before him?) Seek to any *Moun- tebank* that comes they know not whence, is here to day, and gone to morrow, than to their own Ministers, who from God have the Rule over them, and Watch for their souls, as they that must give account to God for them? yea, whom from many years experience in life and Doctrine they have found able and faithful? In the fear of God consider this: They are not your ministers (I speak as to the most in their Pulpits and publick Ministry, but these Hucksters and Quack-Salvers in corners practising upon you, that have privily brought in damnable Doctrines, and leavened so great a lump of people in the Nation with fowr and unfound Doctrine. If thou wouldst therefore be preserved from error, make use, as of the Sword of the Word in thy own hand, so of the holy skill that God hath given thy Faithful Minister for thy defence. Wait on his publick Ministry, praying for divine assistance to be poured down on him, and a divine blessing from his labours to fall on thy self. If at any time thou art in the dark concerning his Message, resort to him, and I dare promise thee (if he answers his name, and be a faithful Minister of the Gospel) an easie access, and hearty welcome to him, only come to learn, not cavil; to have thy conscience satisfied, not any itch of vain curiosity rub'd. Our Saviour who was so willing to satisfie his Disciples concerning the Doctrine he publickly preach't, that in private he open'd it to them more fully, yet when they came with nice and curious questions, did rather chuse to repel that humour by a Reproof, than cherish it by a satisfying answer. *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons: And at another time, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou me.* He takes Peter off from an unprofitable question, to mind a necessary duty.

CHAP. XXV.

Directions how to use this Sword for the cutting down, and conquering the lusts in our own bosoms, and temptations to sin from without.

Hardly, The third enemy we are to fight, is made up of an Army of Lusts lodg'd within our own bosoms, which have Satan to head and lead them forth against us. And who that believes, he hath a God to save, can be unwilling to engage against this cursed Combination of Lusts and Devils? Of the *Amazons* were said when in War with other Nations, to fight for honour and glory; but against the *Carthaginians* for their very life and being. In this War against sin and Satan, both lie at stake. This, this is the most Noble War of all other. Noble, First, because Just. 'Tis too true, I fear, what one faith of the Wars, which the great *Monarchs* of this world wage one against another. That the cause is very seldom so clear for which they take Arms, but there is some ground of scruple left in the conscience of the undertaker. But here we are put out of all doubt. This, without abusing the name, may be called The

Holy War, for it is against the only enemy that the Holy God hath in the world, who hath himself taken the field, and set up his Royal Standard in defiance of it; to which he calls all mankind, some by the voice of a natural conscience, and others by the loud sound of his Word to repair, and upon our Allegiance to him our Sovereign Lord and Creator to help him against the Mighty; not because he needs our help, but expects our duty, and had rather reward our Loyalty, than punish our Rebellion. Some have been found, who for shame have killed themselves, that their Prince, through their cowardize, had lost the Victory. O what confusion then will one day fill our faces, if we by our faintness or treachery, do what lies in us, help Satan and sin to triumph over God himself! But again, It is a Noble War, because hard and difficult. This is an enemy stout and stubborn, such as will try both our skill and strength to

the uttermost. Never did Coward overcome in this War. What sin loseth is but by inches, and what it gains hardly lets go. They who follow this war clofely, will find a lifes work at least of it. O you that love brave Exploits, & hunt for enterprizes that only a few generous spirits dare undertake; Here is that you look for, fighting with men, and storming of Castles, is but childrens play to this encounter, where Devils and lusts are to be repelled. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a City, Prov. 16.*

32. Better, because he overcomes a worse enemy, infinitely more potent and puissant. Few alas, of the worlds Swordmen, so famed for their conquests, but have lived and died slaves to sin, Cowardly submitting the neck of their souls to draw the Iron Chariot of a base lust, while they have proudly fate to be drawn in Triumph by those whom they have taken prisoners in War. Thus as *Hannibal* was beaten at Home in his own Countrey, who was a Victor in his foreign expeditions; so too many that do great feats at Arms abroad, which makes them famous in this world, are miserably beaten, and shamefully trampled upon by their own corruptions at home, that will make them much more infamous in the other world. But be not you (O ye Saints) dismayed at the report of your enemies strength and number; The greater will be your victory, and the more your Captives to draw your Triumphant Chariot; neither let your hearts faint to see the conquering *Cæsars* deploiled of their Ensigns of Honour by this enemy, which themselves had won from others; and die in chains, slaves to their lusts, that had lived Conquerors over men. Remember for your comfort, it is but the unbelieving world, such as are without spiritual Arms, and so abandoned of God, that are left thus to become a prey to sin and Satan: But you have a God on your side, who gives you the consecrated Sword of his Word for your defence, a weapon whose edge Satan hath already felt, and therefore trembles whenever Faith draws it forth. He that made this *Leviathan* (as is said of the other, *Job 40. 19.*) can make this his Sword to approach to him, and the heart of all thy lusts also. But I forbear; my task in this place being not to excite you to, but direct you in the management of your fight with this your enemy, and that also only by teaching you the use of this one weapon the Word of God in order to repelling motions to sin from within, or temptations to it from Satan without. First therefore,

SECT. I.

First, Take some pains to collect out of the Word, the several lineaments with which the Spirit of God doth paint out the deformity of sin, that so thou mayst make it the more odious and hateful to thy thoughts, when by laying them together, thou shalt see in its true picture and portraiture (drawn by so skilful and faithful a hand) the fair face of this goodly *Lady*, whose beauty Satan doth so highly commend to thy wanton embraces. Poor man lins upon Satans credit, and receives it into his bosom, as *Jacob* did his Wife into his bed, before he sees its face, or knows

well what it is; and therefore as he in the morning found her to be not that beautiful *Rachel* as was promised, but a blear-eyed *Leah*; so the sinner too late, when his conscience awakes, sees himself miserably cheated and disappointed of what he lookt for, and finds a Purgatory where he expected a Paradise.

Now that thou mayst (Christian) the better see the ugly shape of this horrid Monster, Sin, observe from the Word of God these four particulars concerning it.

First, The birth and extraction of it.

Secondly, The names given it.

Thirdly, Its Nature: And

Fourthly, Its properties.

First, The birth and pedigree of sin, who is its father, and from whom is it descended? The Holy God disowns it. The Sun can as soon beget darkness, as God, who is the Father of lights, be the Author of sin: *From him comes every good and perfect gift, Jan. 1. 13.* But O Sin, whence art thou? Thou art not his Creature, he neither made thee, nor ever moved any to thy production. Certainly, if it were from him, he would like and love it; Every one loves his own child though never so black, much more doth God like what is his. We find him, looking back upon every days work of the Creation, and upon all at last, pleased with what he had done, *All was very good, Gen. 1.* But of sin what he thinks, see *Deut. 7. 22. Prov. 6. 16. Rev. 2. 6, 15.* where he expresseth his detestation and hatred of it, from which hatred proceed all those direful plagues and Judgements thundered from the fiery mouth of his most Holy Law against it; nay, not only the work; but worker also of iniquity becomes the object of his hatred, *Psalms 5. 5.* So that if God were the Author of sin, he should be a hater of himself. Well, at whose door then doth God lay this Brat to find a father? Surely, at the Devils, *John 8. 44. Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.* And again in the same place, *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Sin is a Brat which calls the Devil both father and mother; for of himself, even of his own free-will, (the womb wherein it was conceived) did he beget it; and having begot it, put it out to Nurse to man. And is not Man, who was made to serve and enjoy the great God his Maker, highly set up, to Suckle and carry this his infernal Masters child about in his arms? Ah poor man, whence are thou fallen! It is strange, that the very remembring whose off-spring thy self wert, doth not strike thee into a horror, to see thy precious soul debased unto such servitude as to fulfil the lusts of that cursed spirit. Never let us spit at the Witch for suffering the devils imps to suck on her body, while we can prostitute our souls to any of his lusts.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The Names and Titles with which the Word stigmatizeth sin. And God, to be sure, mis-calls none: If a thing be sweet, he will not say it is bitter; if good, he will not call it evil: For he claps a woe upon his head that doth so, *Isa. 5. 20.* Never think

think to find Honey in the Pot, when God writes Poyson on its Cover. We may say of every sin in this respect, what *Abigail* of her Husband; as is its name in Scripture, so is it: If God call it folly, then there is no wisdom to be found in it. The Devil indeed teacheth sinners to cover foul practices with fair names, Superstition must be stiled Devotion; Covetousness, Thrift; Pride in Apparel, Handsomness; Looseness, Liberty; and Madness, Mirth. And truly there is great need for sinners to do thus, to make this fullsome dish go down with less regret. There are some have made a hearty meal of Horse-flesh, or the like Carrion under a better name, whose stomachs would have risen against it, if they had known what it was. Therefore as Persecutors of Old wrapt the Christians in the skins of those Beasts, which would render them the most desirable prey to those they were cast; so Satan and our false hearts present sins to us under those names that will sharpen our appetites to them, or at least take away the abhorrency our consciences else would shew against them: But canst thou be content, poor soul, to be so easily cheated? Will the fire burn thee the less, into which thou art emboldened to put thy finger, because a Knave that owes thee an ill turn, tells thee that it will not hurt thee? Hear rather what the God of Truth saith of sin, and by what names he calls it, and you shall find, That whatever is dreaded by us, or hated, feared or loathed in all the World, They are borrowed, and applied to sin: The vomit of Dogs, the venom of Serpents, the stench of Rotten Sepulchres, Dunghills and Jakes, the deadliest diseases and sores, Gangrenes, Leprosies, and Plague attributed to it, 2 Pet. 2. 20. Luke 3. 7. Rom. 3. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 17. 1 Kings 8. 38. yea, Hell is raked for an expression to set it out, it being compared to the very fire of Hell it self, James 2. 6. And because of the penury and straitness of these appellations, (not able to express its full horridness) therefore it is called by its own name, as the worst that God himself can say thereof, *Sinful sin*, Rom. 7. 13. Now what shall be done to the thing that the great God thus loaths, and loads with such names of dishonour, thereby to signify his abhorrence of it? What? every gracious heart will soon resolve, that he should pursue it with fire and sword, till we have executed upon it the judgement written in its utter name and destruction.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, The nature of Sin as the Word defines See its description, 1 Joh. 3. 4. *Sin is the transgression of the Law*: A few words, but of weight enough to press the soul that commits it to Hell, yea, to press sin it self to death in the heart of a Saint, if laid on with these considerations.

First, Whose Law it is by sinning we break; not of some petty Prince. (and yet such conceive their Honour so deeply concern'd in their Laws, that they take vengeance on the Violators of them) but of the great God whose glorious Name is in every Attribute Assaulted and Reproach'd by the sinner, yea the very life and being of God endeavoured to

be destroyed; *Peccatum est Desidium*. For he that would Rob God of his honour, is an enemy to his very being, because Gods being is so wrapt up in his glory, that he cannot out-live the loss of it. These, it is true, are above the reach of the sinners short Arm, but that is no thanks to him, because his sin aims at these, though it cannot carry its shot so far as to hurt him.

Secondly, What Law it is; not cruel, writ with the blood of his Creatures, as the Laws of some Tyrant Princes are, who consult with their own lust, and not the Peoples good in their Edicts. But this Law is equal and good; in keeping of which is life. So that no provocation is given by any rigour of unnecessary Taxes imposed upon us to rise up against it. What iniquity (saith God) have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me? Jer. 2. 5. He that put away his Wife, was to give her a Bill of Divorce, Declaring the cause of his leaving her. Thus God condescends to expostulate with sinners, and asks what evil they can charge upon him or his Government that they forsake him. But alas, no more cause can be given, than why a Beast in a fat, sweet Pasture, should break the Hedge to get into a Barren Heath, or a Dirty Lane, where nothing but starving is to be had.

Thirdly, At whose motion the poor creature transgresseth the good Law of God, and that is of a cursed spirit the Devil, no less our enemy than Gods enemy. Now for a child at the solicitation of his fathers greatest enemy, and his own also, to take up rebellious arms against a dear loving Parent, adds to the monstrosity and unnaturalness of the fact. This thou dost, Christian, when by sin thou transgresseth the Law of God: And now by this time methinks I see thy blood to rise and boyl with anger in thee, while thy God points to thy sin, and tells thee, This, O my child, is the enemy that would take away my glory and life too by thy means, who by a debt both of Nature and Grace, owest thy whole self to live and dye for the maintaining of my honour! Art thou not as ready to fall upon thy sin, and drag it to Execution, as the Servants of *Ahabuerus* were to lay hold of *Haman*, and cover his face as a son of death, when their Prince did but vent his wrath conceived against him? Esther 7. 8. Certainly, were but the love of God well kindled in our bosomes, we should even spit fire on the face of any that durst tempt us to sin against him.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The properties of Sin discovered by the Word of God. I shall content my self with three. It hath, 1. A defiling, 2. A disturbing, 3. A damning property.

First, A defiling property, called *Filthiness of flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. 7. 1. It besmeares both. The whole World is said to lie in wickedness; as a beast in his dung and ordure, or as a rotten Carcass in its slime and putrefaction, 1 John 5. 19. It is that Leprosie which infects man, and the very house he lives in also. Wherefore did God send

the flood in Noah's time, but to wash away that filthy generation as dung from the face of the Earth? But because this Pest-house of the world is not cleared sufficiently, it is reserv'd for a more thorough Purgation by fire at the last day. Do but think, Christian, what a beauty Man was, till he was pock-broken (as I may say so) by sin, and what a glory shined upon the whole Creation before sin by its poisonous breath had dimm'd and blasted it, and then guess what a filthy thing it is, what a strong poison it is that not only diffus'd its malignity through the soul and body of man, but had such direful effects upon the whole compages and frame of the visible Creation, that it will never come to its first beauty, till, like a batter'd canker'd piece of Plate, it be melted and refined by an universal conflagration. And is not your soul yet loathed with the thoughts of sin? Some Beasts (they say) the Ermin for one, will dye before she will be got into the dirt to defile her beautiful skin; and wilt thou, Christian, and that after it hath cost Christ his blood to purchase his Spirit for thy cleansing, bedabble thy self in sin's Puddle? God forbid. Did Ezekiel so abhor to eat mans dung imposed on him by God? that he cries out, *Ah Lord God! behold, my soul hath not been polluted*, &c. Ezek. 4. 14. And is any unclean lust which God himself compares to no better thing, so dainty a bit as to be desired by thee, Christian, who hast sate at Christ's Table, and knowest what entertainment there is to be had? Methinks thou should rather cry out with the Prophet, *Ah Lord! my soul hath not, or at least let it not be polluted with this abominable thing*.

Secondly, A disturbing property. Sin, it breaks the peace of the soul, yea of the whole world: It brings confusion with it, and makes the place a seat of War whereever it comes. An Army of Evils are at its heels, to set down where it is lodged: *If thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door*, Gen. 4. 7. *There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God*, Isa. 57. 21. Here is Gods hand we see to the Warrant, sentencing the sinner to the Rack of a self-torturing conscience. Who is able to express the anguish which an Accusing Conscience feels! and those dreadful fits of convulsion with which it rends and tears it self! One you hear roaring and crying out, *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither any rest in my bones, because of my sin*, Psalm 38. 3. Another, *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted*, Psalm 88. 14. A third, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*, Gen. 4. 13. And a fourth, so unable to stand under the clamour of his guilt, that he runs to the Halter, and hangs himself to get out of the Din and Dolour it makes in his ears, *Math. 27. 5*. And is not he like to be well cured of his torment, that throws himself into Hell-fire to find ease? And as sin disturbs the inward peace of the soul, so the outward peace of the world. What else but sin hath put the world in an uproar, and set all the creatures together by the ears? *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not from your lusts that War in your members?* Jam. 4. 1. This sets near relations at bitter feud, firing the house over their heads, that Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, cannot abide together under one Roof. *Dalilah the*

betrays her Husband into his bloody enemies hands: And *Abshalom* riseth up to take away the life of his dear father. This is the Whisperer that separates chief friends, and makes those that have drunk of our Cup, to lift up the heel upon us, and with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, to plot our ruine, and give counsel against our very life. In a word, such a kindle-fire sin is, that the flames it kindles, flye not only from one Neighbours house to the other, but from one Nation to another. All the water in the Sea that runs between Kingdom and Kingdom, cannot quench the Wars it raiseth: But it makes men that live at one end of the World, thirst for the blood and treasure of those that live at the other: So that the earth is but as a Cock-pit, where there is little else but fighting and killing one another. And is this the Guest thou canst find in thy heart to bid welcome within thy bosom?

Thirdly, And lastly, A damning property. If all the mischief sin did us were in this world, it were bad enough; but considering our short stay here, it would give some ease to our thoughts, that we should have done with it and this life together: But to be worried here by it, and damned for it also to eternal torments in another world, this is intolerable! Methinks that place; *Math. 25. 41. Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*, should make us sit down and consider, whether any sin be so pleasurable or desirable, as should make it worth lying in endless torments to obtain and enjoy it a few fleeting days and months, that are at an end almost as soon as their beginning commenceth. Thou knowest, Sinner, already the best of thy sinful pleasure, but not the worst of thy punishment, which is so great as loseth its chief emphasis by translating it into our language, and cloathing it with expressions borrowed even from those things that most dread us in this life: Alas, what is the fire and brimstone we see and fear so much here, to that which burns in the infernal Lake! Truly, little more than painted fire in the Wall, is to that which burns on our hearth: This in our Chimney was made for our use and comfort chiefly, but that fire in Hell (whether material or not, is not material to know) is for no other end than to torment sinners in: This in our Kitching is kindled by a little puff of wind, and quenched by a little water; but the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle that, Isa. 30. 33. and where shall we find Buckets to quench that which God kindles? They say, smelling of the Earth is healthful for the body; and taking in the scent of this sulphurous pit by frequent meditation, cannot but be as wholesome for the soul. If many had descended thus into Hell, while on earth, their souls had not, 'tis like, dropt into Hell, when their bodies fell into the grave. O Christian, be sometimes walking in the company of those places of Scripture, which set out the state of the damned in Hell, and their exquisite torments there. This is the true house of mourning, and the going into it by serious meditation, is a Sovereign means to make the living lay it to heart; and laying it to heart, there is the less fear that thou wilt throw thy self by thy impenitency into this so uncomfortable a place, who art offer'd so fairly a Mansion in Heavens blissful Palace, upon thy Faith and Repentance.

CHAP. XXVI.

Some Scripture-Answers fitted to the common Arguments of the Tempter (with which he usually enticeth to sin) are here brought to the Christian's hand for his defence.

Secondly, Provide thy self with Scripture-Answers to Satans false Reasonings, with which he puts a fair colour on his foul motions, the better to gain thy consent. He is wily, thou hadst need be wary. He doth not only propound the sinful object, but also sets a fair gloss upon it, and urges the soul with Arguments to embrace his offer. And when sin comes thus forth *Goliath*-like, it is not *Saul's* Armour, but the smooth stones of the brook; not thy own resolution, but the Divinity of Scripture-Arguments that can preserve thee, or prostrate thy enemy. Now thou wilt find in the Word an Answer put into thy mouth to refel all Satan's Sophistry. And this indeed is to be an *Apollos*, mighty in the Scriptures, when we can stop the Devils mouth, and choak his bullets with a word seasonably interposed betwixt us and the temptation.

It will not therefore be amiss to give a few instances whereby this direction may be made more easily practicable in the hand of weaker Christians.

SECT. I.

First, Sometimes Satan thus insinuates himself into a soul. What man? will one sin, if yielded to, so much hurt thee? One mole doth not mar the beauty of the face, nor can one sin spoyl the beauty of thy soul; and it is no more that I am a sinner for. If I had thee wallow in every puddle, thou might'st well abhor the motion; But why art thou so afraid of one spot being seen on thy garment? The best Jew hath its flaw, and the holiest Saint his falling.

Now to refel this motion, when so mannerly and modestly proposed.

Answer, First, The Word will tell thee that no sin is single. It is impossible to embrace or allow one sin, and be free of others. For

First, He that yields to one sin, casts contempt upon the Authority that made the whole Law, and upon this account breaks it all: *Whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James 2. 10. And he gives the reason in the next words, *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill*. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the Law. Not that he is guilty of all distributively, but collectively, as *Eftius* well notes. For the Law is one Copulative, one Commandment cannot be wrong'd, but all are interested in the same; the whole body suffers by a wound given to one part: *God speaks all these words*, Exod. 20. They are ten words, but one Law.

Secondly, By allowing one sin, we disarm and deprive our selves of having a conscientious Argument to defend our selves against any other sin. He that can go against his conscience in one, cannot

plead conscience against any other: For if the Authority of God awes him from one, it will from all; *How can I do this, and sin against God?* said *Joseph*. I doubt not but his Answer would have been the same, if his Mistress had bid him to lie for her, as now when she enticed him to lye with her. The ninth Commandment would have bound him as well as the seventh. Hence the Apostle exhorts, *Not to give place to the Devil*, Eph. 4. 27. Implying, by yielding to one, we lose our ground, and what we lose, he gains; and let him alone to improve advantages. The little Wimple once entered, the Workman can then drive a great Nail: One sin will widen thy swallow a little, that thou wilt not so much strein at the next.

Thirdly, Allow one sin, and God will give you over to other sins; *Rom. 1. 23. Wherefore God also gave them up unto uncleanness*. The Gentiles gave themselves to Idolatry, *vers. 22.* and God gave them up unto other beastly lusts. When *Judas* began to play the Thief, I question whether he meant to turn Traitor; No, his Treason was a punishment for his thievery. He allowed himself in a secret sin, and God gave him up to one more open and horrid. But,

Fourthly, Suppose thou couldst (which is impossible) take one sin into thy bosom, and shut all the rest out, yet the Word will tell thee, First, That thou art a servant to that one sin, *Rom. 6. 16. His servants you are, to whom ye obey*. And consequently the Devil's servants, whose Kingdome you endeavour to hold up by defending though but this one Castle against God your Maker. Neither will it excuse thee to say thou intendest not so. Haply, Covetousness is thy sin, and it is thy profit thou aimest at, not siding with the Devil against GOD. Though this is not thy express end who sinnest, yet it is the end of the sin which thou committest, and of Satan that puts thee upon the work, and so will be charged upon thee at last. The common Soldier ordinarily looks no higher than his pay, this is it draws him into the field, yet they make themselves Traitors by assisting him that leads them on against their Prince; and it will not serve the turn for them to say they fought for their pay, and not to dethrone him. *Ahab sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*, 1 Kings 21. 20. And yet we read not that he made any express Covenant with the Devil; but the meaning is, he did that which in effect mounted to no less. He knew, that if he sinned, he should pay his soul for it, and he would have his lust, notwithstanding he was acquainted with its price, and therefore interpretatively he sold his soul that he might enjoy his sin. Secondly, Thou may'st learn from the Word, That thou canst not be a servant to any one sin, and to God, at the same time; *Matth. 6. 24. You cannot serve two Masters; you cannot serve God and Mammon*. By Mammon is meant

ment one particular lust, *Covetousness*. One body may as well have two souls, as one soul two Masters. One soul hath but one love; and two cannot have the Supremacy of it. I have heard indeed of a Wretch that said, *He had one soul for God, and another for the Devil also*; but if he hath one soul in Hell, I am afraid he will not find another for Heaven; and one sin will as certainly send thee thither, as a thousand. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* He doth not only exclude him that is *all these*, but *any of these*. It is certain, all men shall die; but all do not die of the same disease. And as certain all impenitent sinners shall be damn'd, but one is damn'd for one, and a second for another, but all meet at last in the same Hell.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, May be thou art tempted to sin by an opportunity of committing it in secret, where thou shalt not pay the loss of thy credit for the purchase of thy pleasure. This was the snare the simple young mans foot was taken in, *Prov. 7. 18.* his strumpet tells him, *the good man was from home*, the coast was clear: They might drink their stolen waters, without fear of being indicted for the Theft. Too many, alas, whom shame of the world keeps from knocking at the fore-door, are easily perswaded to sin if they may slip in at the postern. *Saul* himself, though ashamed to go to a Witch in his Princely Robe, because he had possess'd the world with an opinion of his hatred of that sin, by putting such to death; yet is not afraid to go *incognito* to one. Therefore as it added much to the weight of the temptations with which the Devil assaulted Christ, that he came to him in the wilderness and solicited him, but to a private, yea secret acknowledging of him, where none could tell Tales what passed between them: So it doth to the glory of that compleat Victory which Christ got over Satan in them all. And how got Christ it, but by this Sword of the Word? Take thou, Christian, therefore the same weapon up to defend thy self against the same enemy.

First, The Word will tell thee, that God is privy to thy most secret sin, *Psal. 90. 8.* *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* They are as plainly seen by him, as any thing can be by us at Noon-day. Nay, he doth not only see and know them, but he sets them before him as a mark to shoot his Arrows of vengeance at. So *Prov. 15. 3.* *The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good.* As he sees when thou shut'st thy closet to pray in secret, and will reward thy sincerity; so he seeth when thou dost it to sin in secret, and will reward thy hypocrisy. Now, if a King sitting on his Throne, scattereth away all evil with his eyes, *Prov. 20. 8.* how much more powerful would the eye of God, if seen looking on us, chase away the most secret motion that stirreth in our heart to sin! Better all the World to see thee, than God, who hath the wrong done him by the sin, and therefore concern'd in justice to do himself right upon thee. He cannot let any go unpunish'd, because a righteous Judge: But there are some sins which re-

quire a more immediate hand of divine vengeance than other, and therefore called, *Crying sins*. And they are such, which either by the place and power of the Offender, man dares not punish, or else so secretly committed, that man cannot take cognizance of the Fact. As *Cain's* bloody Murder on his Brother, *Gen. 4. 10.* *Thy brothers blood cryeth.*

Secondly, The Word will inform thee of an informer that thou hast in thy own bosom; Thy Conscience, I mean, which goes along with thee, and is witness to all thy fine-laid plots, and what it sees it writes down, for it is a Court of Record; thou canst not sin so fast, but it can write after thee, and the pen with which Conscience writes down our sins, hath a sharp nib, it cuts deep into the very heart and soul of the sinner. The Heathens, *their thoughts* are said to accuse them, *Rom. 2. 15.* And no torment in the World comparable to an accusing conscience. *The Spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* *Prov. 18. 14.* Who? Not men, nor Angels, *Nullus oculus molestior cuique suo: Non est aspectus quem tenebrosa conscientia suffugere magis velit, minui possit.* Bern. No eye affrights a sinner more than his own; it is that which he most desires to run from, but least can. Such a poor wretch is like *Regulus* in his barrel stuck with Nails, which way soever he turns himself, *in vulnus inclinat*, he is prickt and wounded. O read those sad instances of *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas*, with others upon Scripture-record, who have been on this Rack, and thou wilt be afraid to sin where Conscience stands by.

Thirdly, Consult the Word, and thou wilt find, that God usually hath put them to shame in this world, that have promised themselves most secrecy in their sinning. It is one of Gods names to be a *Revealer of secrets*, *Dan. 2. 47.* And among other secrets, he forgets not to bring to light these *hidden things of darkness*, *1 Cor. 6. 5.* those sins that are forged in a darker shop than others, and that often in this world. Indeed the Attribute of his Omniscience suffers deeply by secret sins: In these men speak what base thoughts they have of God, as if he were a God of the day, and not of the night; therefore to vindicate this Attribute, and to strike an inward fear thereof into the hearts of men, he doth dig these Foxes out of their holes wherein they earth themselves, and expose their sins to the view of the world, which they thought none should have known besides themselves and their partners in the sin. Such an effect had the discovery of *Ananias* and *Sapphira's* secret sin, *Acts 5. 11, 13.* And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things. See therefore how God hath befooled men when they have Arted it most in packing their sins, to hide them from the Worlds eye. No Art was wanting in the Patriarchs to conceal their unnatural sin against their Brother: What a fair probable Tale do they tell the old man their father, who believed all, and required no further? How true were they among themselves (though so many in the plot?) that none of them should blab it out at one time or another, was strange. How long did this sleep before discover'd? And what a strange providence to bring their wickedness to light? So *Gehazi* play'd his part cunningly

God's
omni-
science

ningly enough one would think, which made him so bold to come before his Master, and impudently lye to his head, not dreaming the least that he was privy to his sin; yet this man is found out, and for the garments he got of Naaman by a lye, he had another given of the Lord, which he was to wear as a Livery of his sin, for he was clothed with a *leprosie*; A garment not as others, to *hide* his shame, but to *discover* it to all the world; A garment more lasting, than the two changes of suits he had from the Syrian; for this lasted him all his life; neither was it then worn out, but to be put on by his children after him, 2 Kings 5. 27. In a word, be he never such a Saint, yet if he goes about to save himself from the shame of a sin by any secret plot of wickedness, he takes the direct way to bring that upon him which he contrives to keep off. *Uriah's* blood was shed only as a sinful expedient to save *David's* credit, that would have suffer'd, if his folly with *Bathsheba* should become a Town talk: And how sped he with this his plot? Ah poor man! All comes out to his greater shame: This engaged God to lay him open; *David* shall know that God will be as tender of his own honour, as he is of his credit; *For thou did'st it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the Sun*, 2 Sam. 12. 12. Yea, *David* himself at last is sick of his own plot; and was not at first more studious to hide his sin, than he was afterwards willing to acknowledge it, and therefore we find him, *Psal.* 51. standing as it were in a white sheet, and doing voluntary penance for his sin in all the Churches of God so long as the Scriptures shall be read in their Assemblies to the end of the world.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, May be thou art tempted to sin by the example of others. Indeed though Example be an artificial Argument, yet is it of great force with many, especially when the persons quoted in favour of a sin, be either the most, or thought to be the best. When most, they carry presently with them those that are false-hearted, or weak-headed, as dead fishes and light straws swim with the stream: for with such shame strikes the greatest stroke, and a multitude to bear one company in a sin, takes away the shame of it: *Where all go naked, few will blush*; they rather are exposed to shame that will be singular, and not do as the rest. As *Micaiah* who was made a scorn because he would not tune his Pipe to *Ahab's* ear, nor joyn with the whole Colledge of his flattering Chaplains in their judgement. Or if they be such who have the reputation for wisdom and piety, then it oft proves a snare to them that are none of the worst; which should make all of high place or eminent grace, very circumspect what opinion or practice they espouse. The Devil is very brag, when he can get such to set their hand to his Testimonial. The Countrey will soon ring of this, and their example be shewn every

where to draw in others. Why, such a one is of this opinion, he holds this, and doth that, I hope he is one you reverence and honour.

Now in this case, consult with the Word, and it will bring thee off this temptation.

First, The Word commands, that we bring the examples of men (be they who they will) to the test of the Word: Is it their Opinion that is quoted? To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them, *Ila.* 8. 20. It is the light which a man carries in his Lanthorn, for which we follow him; That gone we leave him. Now we see by this Scripture, he hath no light, that hath not the Word to vouch his Opinion: So that neither knows he whither himself goes, nor we whither such a one will lead us. Again, It is the practice of another that is laid before thee for thy Copy to write after? What saith the Word, *Follow not a multitude to do evil*, *Exod.* 23. 2. Examples are not our Warrant, but Precepts: Neither will it procure a man a discharge, because he had a president in his sin. *Adam* indeed, said the Woman gave him the Apple, but it did not excuse him from paying the Reckoning with Her; she was indeed first in the transgression, yet both met in the punishment. Would'st thou eat poyson, because another dares be so bold to be thy Taster? Surely his example cannot make the poyson less deadly to thee that dost pledge him.

Secondly, The Word will tell thee, that the best of Saints do not always foot it right, but too oft are found to tread awry: *In many things we offend all*, *James* 3. 2. And he that is himself subject to step awry, may also lead thee aside. Therefore *Paul*, as holy a man as lived, when he calls others after him, would have them follow him with their eyes open, to see whether he followed Christ, *1 Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ*. The holiest life of the best Saint on earth, is but an imperfect translation of the perfect rule of Holiness in the Word; and therefore must be tryed by it. Hence it is the Character of sincerity, to look to the way rather than the company. *The high-way of the upright is to depart from evil*, *Prov.* 16. 17. He consults with the Word, whether the way be Good, or Evil: If he finds it Evil, he will not into it to bear another company, no though he be a Saint. Indeed God suffers some to step awry, for the proof of others. Thus, *Heresies come, that they who are approved, may be made manifest*, *1 Cor.* 11. 19. And *Dem.* 13. 1. *Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that Prophet, for the Lord thy God proveth you, so know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart*.

Thus I have given a few instances by which you see how this Sword of the Word (as that in the Cherubims hand) may be turned every way to preserve the Christian from venturing to sin upon any pretence whatever it be.

CHAP. XXVII.

Two Directions more, How to use the Word for our defence against temptations to sin.

THirdly, Hide the Word in thy heart. This was David's preservative, *Pf. 119. 11. Thy Word I have hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* It was not the Bible in his hand to read it, nor the Word on his tongue to speak of it, nor in his head to get a notional knowledge of it; but the hiding it in his heart, that he found effectual against sin. It is not meat in the dish, but stomach, that nourisheth; not physick in the glass, but taken into the body that purgeth. Now, heart in Scripture, though it be used for all the faculties of the soul, yet principally for the Conscience, and the affections.

S E C T. I.

First, For the Conscience, *1 John 4. 20. If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* That is, if our Conscience condemn us justly, to be sure our case is sad, because God knows by us more than we by our selves, and can charge us with many sins that conscience is not privy to.

Now, Thus Christian labour to hide the Word in thy heart, that is, in thy conscience: let it there have a Throne, and it will keep thee in a holy awe.

First, Look upon the Word as stamp'd with divine Authority, the Law which the Great God gives thee his poor creature to walk by. This impress on thy conscience, would make thee tremble at the thought of a sin, which is the Traytors Dagger that strikes at God himself, by the contempt it casts upon his Law. And if some Assassins (intending to stab a Prince) have been so over-awed with a few beams of Majesty shor from his mortal brow, that their hearts would not serve them to make the horrid attempt: How much more must the dread of the great God's Majesty, darted from his Word into the creatures conscience, deter him from practising any Treason against his Maker? *Pf. 119. 161. Princes persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.* As if he had said, I had rather incur their wrath for my Holiness, than make thy word my enemy by my sin.

Secondly, Look upon the Word of God as that Law by which thou art to be judged at the great day. *Rom. 2. 13. God will judge the secrets of all men according to my Gospel.* Then the book of thy conscience shall be open'd, and compared with this, and accordingly will sentence of life or death be pronounced by Christ thy Judge. Thou mayst know beforehand how it will go with thee at that day; if now thou canst not stand before the Word as open'd by a poor Minister, and applied by thy own conscience, what will you do when it is opened by Christ? Now thy conscience from the Word condemns thee, but not finally; for by thy timely repentance and faith, the sentence of this private Court may be reversed, and the Word which even now bound thee over to

death, will acquit and justify thee. But at that great day of Assize there will be a final decision of thy cause. If then the judgment goes against thee, thou art a lost man for ever. No reverting the sentence to be expected, not so much as a reprieve to stay the execution: But as the Word goeth out of the Judges mouth, the sinners face is covered to be immediately delivered into the Tormentors hands. And darest thou now, O man, bid any lust welcome, while thou seest the gibbet set up, and the everlasting chains prepared, in which the Word of God Dooms every sinner to hang? Canst thou read thy sentence, and yet like thy sin that brings it inevitably upon thy head?

Secondly, Heart in Scripture is most frequently taken for the will and affections. *My son, give me thy heart, Prov. 23. i. e. thy love. So Deut. 10. 12. To love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* And thus, Christian, to hide the Word in thy heart, would be a rare Antidote against the poison of sin. The chains of love are stronger than the chains of fear. *Herods love of Herodias, was too hard for his fear of John.* He had some hold of his conscience that awed him, and bound his hands awhile: But his Minion had his affections, and the heart can unbind the hands; his love to her made him shake off his respect to him, and at last embroil his hands in his blood. He that is only prisoner to the command, and bound to his good behaviour by the chains of terror which the threatening claps upon his conscience, may have these knocks off, and then he will shake off his obedience also. But he that loves the Word, and the purity of its precepts, cannot turn traitor. When such a one sins, he makes as deep a wound in his own heart, as in the Law; and therefore trembles at displeasing God. *Psal. 119. 119, 120. I love thy testimonies; my flesh trembleth for fear of thee.* O that is the blessed fear, which is the daughter of Love.

Now to enflame thy heart with love to the Word, consider, that it is the faithfulest Monitor, and the sweetest comforter thou hast in all the world.

First, It is thy faithfulest Monitor: It tells thee plainly of all thy faults, and will not suffer sin to lie upon thee, but points to the enemy that hunts for the precious souls life; it discovers all the designs and plots Satan and thy beloved lusts have against thee. This made David love it so dearly, *Pf. 19. 10. Moreover, by them thy servant is warned;* besides all its other good Offices it doth for thee, it warns thee of every danger, and shews thee how to escape it: O how should this endear it to thee! Did *Abasherus* heap such abundant honour upon *Mordecai*, who had but once been a means to save his life by discovering a Treason plotted against his person! How much more shouldst thou honour and love the good Word of God, which hath so oft saved thy soul out of thy spiritual enemies hands, and doth daily give thee warning

warning how to escape the snares of sin, without which it were impossible for thee to find them out, or avoid them! Was *David* so affected with the wisdom and love of *Abigail* in the advice she gave him, whereby he was kept from shedding blood in his fury, that he took her into his bosom to be his Wife, as a reward of her kindness to him? And shall not the counsel the Word hath given thee, make thee in love much more with it?

Secondly, The Word is thy sweetest Comforter. When the poor soul is distressed with guilt, and afflicted with the terrors of divine wrath for his sins, O what miserable comforters then are this worlds pleasures and treasures! How little can any creature contribute to the ease of such a one! no more than he who standing upon the shore, and sees his friend drowning in the Sea, but knows not how to reach any help to him. It is the Word alone that can walk upon those waves, and come to the souls relief. This is able to restore the soul, and buoy it up from the bottom of the Sea of despair. Though the soul be with those Mariners at its wits end, and knows not what to do, yet then the Word stands up (as *Paul* before them) and as it were thus speaks to him, Poor soul, thou should'st have hearkened to my voice, and not have looked from thy Harbour by sinning against GOD, to come to this harm and loss: But be of good cheer, do thus and thus, repent of thy folly, and speedily turn to thy God in Christ Jesus, and there shall be no loss of thy life. *There is forgiveness with the Lord, therefore be not feared.* And so in all other troubles, this sends in the Saints comfort; when the world gives him gall, this brings Wine; When it meets with nothing but crosses and vexations from that, this sweetly recreates and cheers his spirits. Here the Christian hath those cooling waters with which he quencherh and allays all his sorrows. And you know what a treasure, a spring or fountain is accounted in dry and hot Countreys. Surely, Christian, when thou considerest how many a sweet draught thou hast had from the Wells of salvation, thou wilt cry out with *David*, *Psal. 119. 93. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.* I do not wonder to see thy enemy endeavour to stop thy Well at which thou should'st draw thy comfort, but that he should be able to persuade thee to do it thy self is strange.

SECT. II.

Fourthly, Plead the promise against sin at the Throne of Grace. He that hath Law on his side (we say) may sue the King; and he that hath a promise on his side, may with humble boldness commence his suit with God. As the veins in the body have arteries to attend them with spirits, so precepts

in the Word have promises to inspirit the Christian, and empower him with strength for his duty. Is there a command to pray? There is also a promise to enable for prayer. *Zech. 12. 10. Rom. 8. 26.* Doth God require us to give him our heart? *My son, give me thy heart,* Prov. 23. 26. The promise saith, *He will give a new heart to us,* Ezek. 36. 26. Doth he command us to mortifie our corruptions? And doth he not promise, *Sin shall not have dominion over us?* Rom. 6. 14. Now to obtain this promise, thou must plead and press it believingly at the Throne of grace. *Quod lex imperat, fides impetrat;* What the precept commands, the prayer of faith begs and receives. Look therefore thou takest God in thy way: First besiege heaven, and then fear not overcoming sin and Hell, when thou hast conquer'd Heaven. Now thou warrest at Gods cost, and not thy own; he that sets thee on, will bring thee off. *David* was a man at Arms, and could handle his weapon against this enemy, as well as another, yet dares not promise himself success till he hath made God his second, *Psal. 119. 132. Order my steps in thy Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.* But if thou thinkest to steal a victory by the strength of thy own resolution, expect an overthrow. And it will be a mercy thou should'st be so served; for a foyle will learn thee humility for the future, but a victory would encrease thy pride; and that is a sad victory, when one sin carries away the spoils which thou hast taken from another. *Jehoshaphat* took the right course to speed, who though he had almost a Million of men he could draw into the field, and that without dreining his Garrisons, yet bespeaks Gods help, as if he had not a man to fight for him, *2 Chron. 20. 12. We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* If an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar* had been at the head of such an Army, I warrant you, they would have known what to have done, and not doubted to carry all before them. But *Jehoshaphat*, a holy humble man, was better instructed. He knew an hoast signifieth nothing, which hath not the Lord of hoasts with them, and that the most valiant can find neither heart nor hand in the day of Battel without his leave who made both: Nor wilt thou, Christian, be able to use thy grace in an hour of temptation, without new grace from God to excite and inforce what thou hast already received from him; and if thou expectest this from him, he expects to hear from thee; neither speaks it God unwillingly to give what he hath promised, because he payes not the debt of the promise untill he be sued for it at the Throne of Grace. No, God takes this method, only to secure his own glory in the giving, and also to greaten our comfort by receiving it in this way of prayer, which is a fit expedient to attain both.

CHAP. XXVIII.

How the Christian may use the Sword of the Word for his defence in any great affliction, outward or inward, And one Direction towards it insisted upon.

Fourthly, I come now to give some little help by way of Direction, How the Christian may use this Sword of the Word for his defence against the fourth Enemy and the last, but not the least. And this is an Army made up of many bands of Afflictions, which from without invade, and within distress him. The Christian in this world, stands not as you may see some houses, so fenced and shadowed with hills or woods, that the wind beats but upon one side of them. No, he lies open to storms and tempests from all quarters of the Heaven: we read of a strange kind of wind that at once *smote the four corners of the house*, in which *Jobs* children were. Truly thus the Christians afflictions beset him round, no corner left unassaulted, and very often he is smitten on all sides at once; crost in his estate, feeble in his body, and afflicted in his spirit all at once; and when so many Seas of sorrows meet, it is no easie work for the poor Christian's heart to stand unbroken amidst the concurrent violence of their waves. Though this is most certain, that those dejections and perturbations with which the minds of the best Saints are so discomposed and ruffled, yea sometimes dismayed and distressed, cannot be charg'd upon any deficiency of the Gospels principles for their support and comfort; but rather on their own impotence and unskilfulness to apply them in their several exigences. My present task is to drop a few words of counsel to the weak Christian, how he may use and wield this Sword of the Word for his defence and comfort in any affliction without, or distress of spirit from within, that may assault him. And here I must not descend to particular cases: that were a voluminous work, and not so proper for this place, but only content my self with some general Rules, that may be applicable to all. Now the cordial and restorative part of the Word (that I mean which principally is prepared and provided for the souls comfort in all its discomforts and distresses) is contained in the promises; these well studied and improved, can alone make thee a comfortable Christian.

Now if thou wouldst improve the promises, so as not to be run down and trampled upon by Satan in any day of distress that comes upon thee, but comfortably lift up thy head in hope and confidence above the waves of thy present sorrows; then hearken to what follows in a few general Rules prepared for thy help.

First, Let it be thy first and chief care to get thy interest in, and right to the promises, cleared up. For this is the hinge on which the great dispute betwixt thee and Satan will move in the day of trouble, except the case be resolved before that overtakes thee. O it is sad for a poor Christian to stand at the door of the promise in the dark night of affliction, afraid to draw the Latch, whereas he should then come as boldly for shelter, as a child into his fathers house: Come

my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thy self, as it were, for a little moment, untill the indignation be over-past, *Isa.* 26. 20. He that hath his Title to the promise proved from the word to his own conscience, will not be wrangled easily out of his comfort. *Naboth* would not part with his inheritance for the pleasure or displeasure of a King; but stands up in the defence of his right to death: And so resolves *Job*, *Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me*, *Job* 27. 5. This was his evidence for heaven; and therefore Satan used his best wits to make him throw it up, but never could effect it: his Title was clear, and he will not be disputed out of it by Satan, no nor afraid to vouch it before God himself, when God in his providence seemed most to disown him, and to handle him as an enemy, *Thou knowest that I am not wicked*, *Job* 10. 7. He saith not, that he hath no sin, but in an humble Appeal to God defends his state, that *He is not wicked*. And this kept the Chariot of his Hope on its wheels all along his sad sufferings; that it was never quite overthrown, though sometimes it seemed to totter and shake.

SECT. I.

Quest. But how shall I know whether I have a right to the promises?

Ans. *First*, Enquire whether thou art united to Christ by faith or no. The promises are not a Common for Swine to root in, but Christs sheeps-walk, for his flock to feed in. *If ye be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to promise*, *Gal.* 3. 29. The promise is the Joynture, and cannot be had but by taking the person of Christ in Marriage. And Faith is the grace by which the soul gives its consent to take Christ as he is offered in the Gospel; called therefore, *A receiving of Christ*, *John* 12. 4. There is no doubt but thou hast often been wooed in the Ministry of the Word by Christs Spokesmen, and that question hath been put to thee for Christ, which was once to *Rebeccah* concerning her taking *Isaac* to Husband, *Wilt thou go with this man?* They have from the Word set him forth in his glories before thee, who he is, and what he brings. Thou hast heard the Articles upon which he is most willing to proceed to Marriage, and take thee as his beloved into his bed and bosom. As

First, That thou send away all other Lovers which have had any pretensions to thee, for he will endure no competitor or partner with him in thy affections. The names of *Baalim* must be taken out of *Israels* mouth, and then God marries himself to her, *Hos.* 2. 17, 18.

Secondly, That thou like his Law as well as his love. Christ will not be husband, where he may not be Master also.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That thou take him for better and for worse, with his Cross as well as with his Crown, to suffer for him as well as to reign with him. Now, what entertainment hath this motion found with thee? Dost thou upon the discovery made of Christ, take liking in his person? Is he transcendently amiable in thy eye, and precious to thy soul, so as to inflame thee with an insatiable desire of him? Canst thou freely pack away thy once darling lusts to gain him? And leap out of the Arms of all thy carnal delights and sinful pleasures, to be taken into his embraces? art thou as willing he should be thy Lord, as thy Love? And as content to bow to his Scepter, as lie in his bosom? In a word, Art thou so enamoured with him, that thou now canst not live without him, nor enjoy thy self, except thou maist enjoy him? Thy heart is wounded with the Darts which his love and loveliness have shot into it, and he himself carries the balm about him which alone can heal it. Let him now require what he will at thy hands, nothing he commands shall be denied. If he bids thee leave father and fathers house, thou wilt go after him though it be to the other end of the World; if he tells thee thou must be base, and poor in the world for his sake, thou art resolved to beg with him, rather than reign without him, yea die for him, than live without him. Come forth thou blessed of the Lord, and put on the Bracelets of the promises; they are the Love-tokens which I am from Christs hand to deliver, and in his Name to promise Marriage to thee. Thou art the happy soul, if there be one on earth, that Christ betroths to himself. Languish no longer in thy unbelieving fears. For thy comfort, know, it is not Christs custom to entangle souls affections, and when he hath got their love, then to deny his to them, and cast them off.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Enquire what effect the promises have upon thy soul. All who have right to the promise, are transformed by the promise. As Satan shed his venomous seed into the heart of Eve by a promise, Gen. 3. 4. *Ye shall not surely die*, whereupon she presently conceived with sin, and was assimilated into the likeness of his Diabolical Nature, wicked as was the Devil himself: So God useth the promises of the Gospel, called therefore *the immortal seed*; to beget his own image and likeness in the hearts of his elect, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature*. That is, be partakers of such Heavenly Holy qualities and dispositions, as will make you like God himself. The promises of the Gospel have in them a fitness, and (when by the Spirit of God applied) a vertue to purifie the heart, as well as to pacifie the conscience. Now you are clean (saith Christ to his Disciples) *through the Word which I have spoken to you*, John 15. 3. Lay therefore thy hand upon thy heart, and speak freely poor soul: Have the promises had a sanctifying transforming vertue upon thee? What of God dost thou find in thy heart more since thy acquaintance with the promises than before? Some use promises as a protection for sin, rather than

an Argument against it. As sin takes occasion by the Commandment to work in the carnal heart all manner of concupiscence, so many are from the promise emboldned to sin more freely. Like Mountebanks that drink poyson in confidence of their Antidote. Now which way works the promise upon thy heart? If the seal of the promise leaves not the impress of God's image on thee, it ratifies no good to thee. If it produces no Holiness in thee, it brings no joy to thee. In a word, if the promise be not to thee a seed of grace, it is no evidence for glory. But if thou canst find it leaves the Supercription of God upon thee, then it assures the love and favour of God to thee.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Enquire in what posture thy heart stands to the word of command. The promise may be is sweet to thy palate, this thou roulest like a lump of sugar under thy tongue, but are not thy teeth set against the command, as if it were gall and Wormwood? Thou smilest on the promise, but when put in mind of thy duty to the command, then haply thy countenance is changed, and a frown sits on thy brow; As if God were some Austere Master that breaks his servants backs with heavy burthens, and thou couldst wish with all thy heart, that a dispensation might be procured for thee, to break now and then a command without forfeiting thy claim to the promise: But because that is not to be hoped for, thou art so kind to thy self, as to give thy self leave to bow down to some Idol of pleasure or profit that thou hast set up in thy heart, and hopest God will be merciful to thee, because it is only in this or that one way thou makest bold with him in. If this shooe fit thy foot, this be the true Character of thy heart (which God forbid) thou hast no lot belongs to thee in the lap of the promise. We have a comfortable promise, Psalm 50. 15. but a guard is set about it, that no disobedient wretch should gather its sweet fruit, *vers. 16. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do that thou shouldst take my Covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?* On the other hand, if thou canst in truth say, that it is not the holy command thou art offended with, but with thy self, because thou canst obey it no more perfectly; that it is not grievous to thee to keep, but break the Laws of God; and though thy foot too often slips, yet thy heart cleaves to them, and will not let thee lie where thou fallest, but up thou gettest to mend thy pace, and mind thy steps better. For thy comfort know poor soul, this sincere respect thou hast to the Commandment, is a most comfortable evidence for thy true Title to the Promise. When David was able to vouch his love to the Command, he did not question his Title to the promise, Psalm 119. 113. there he asserts his sincere affection to the precepts, *I hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love*. Mark, he doth not say he is free from vain thoughts, but he hates them; he likes their company no better than one would a pack of thieves that break into his house. Neither saith he, that he fully kept the Law, but he loved the Law, even when he failed

of exact obedience to it. Now from this Testimony his conscience brought in for his love to the Law, his faith acts clearly and strongly on the promise in the next words, *Thou art my hiding place, and my shield, I hope in thy Word*, verse 114.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, If thou questionest thy right to one promise, enquire whether thou canst not discern thy interest in a second; which if thou canst, thou mai'st conclude, thou hast a right to that other thou did'st doubt of, yea and to all the rest. For as there is a concatenation of graces, he that finds one hath all; so of promises, he that is heir to one, hath right to all. May be when thou readest that promise, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*, Matth. 5. 8. the remainders of corruption not yet fully mortified in thy heart, scare thee from applying it to thy self as thy portion. But for its next Neighbour promise, *verse 7. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied*. Haply, thou feelest such a pinching sense of thy guilt, and want of holiness, as will enforce thee to acknowledge, that if ever a man in a burning feaver thirsted for drink, or one half-starved desired food, then thou dost crave and cry for the righteousness of Christ to justify thy person, and grace from Christ to sanctify thy Nature. So that thou canst not but see this promise spoken to thee. And if this belongs to

thee, then the former, and all the other with it. For they are branches in the same Covenant, which God doth not dismember, but gives it entire with all the branches growing on it to be the Believer's portion. Hence it is they are all called *Heirs of Promise*, Heb. 6. 7. Not heirs of this promise or that, but of *Promise*; that is of the Covenant, which comprehends all the Promises of the Gospel: So that, as he hath hold of the mans whole body, that hath fast hold of his hand, though it be but one member of it, because it is knit to the rest, and by it he may draw the rest to him: So if thou hast hold of any one promise, thou hast hold of all other, and mai'st infer thy right from this to them. And as one may draw out the Wine of a whole Hogshead at one Tap; so may a poor soul derive the comfort of the whole Covenant to himself through one Promise which he is able to own and apply. *We know* (saith Saint John) *that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren*, 1 Joh. 3. 14. Eternal life is the Cream and top of all Covenant-blessings. Now a poor Christian may, upon the inward feeling of this one Grace of Love in his heart (being the condition annex'd to this promise) know that he is in a state of Life and happiness. And why? Because wherever this Grace is in truth, there are all other Saving Graces; Christ is not divided in these, and consequently he that can apply this promise, hath a right to all.

CHAP. XXIX.

Five Directions more upon the same account.

SECT. I.

Direct. 2. **T**AKE some pains to sort the Promises (as thou readest the Scriptures) and reduce them to their proper heads. There is great multiplicity of tryals and temptations which God is pleased to exercise his Saints with, *Many are the troubles of the righteous*, Psal. 34. And there is variety of promises provided to administer suitable comfort to their several sorrows. The Scriptures are a spiritual *Physick-garden*, where grows an Herb for the cure of every Malady. Now it were of admirable use to the Christian, if he would gather some of every sort, such especially as he hath found most to affect his heart, of which he can say with *Origen*, *Hæc est Scriptura mea*, This portion of Scripture is mine; and then to write such down, as the Physician doth his Receipts for this and that disease by themselves. May it not shame the Christian, to see a Scholar know every book in his great Library, and what it treats on, so that he can presently go to any one of them all, and make use of their notions as he hath occasion; and that the Christian who hath but one book to advise with, and that none of the greatest bulk, but sufficient as to make him wise unto salvation, so to make him comfortable in every

condition that can befall him, should not be acquainted, if not with all, yet with some choice promises of every sort, to which he may be able to resort for counsel and comfort in the day of his distress? Now the best time for this work, is, when thou art yet at ease, in the lap of Health and Prosperity. The *Apothecary* gathers his *simples* in the Spring, which he useth in Winter. The *Mariner* provides his Tackling in the Harbour, before he puts forth to Sea. And the wise Christian will store himself with promises in health for sickness; and in peace, for future perils. It is too late for a man to think of running home for his Cloak, when on his way he is caught in a storm. *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished*, Prov. 22. 3.

SECT. II.

Thirdly, Observe the full latitude of Promises. The Covenant of Grace comprehends the weak Christian as well as the strong; *If Children, then Heirs*, Rom. 8. 17. Not if children grown to this age, or that stature; but *if children*. Christ hath in his family children of all sizes, some little, and others tall Christians. If thou beest a child, though in the Cradle, the promise is thy portion. *All the promises*

of God in him are *Yea* and in him *Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1. See here is the state and relation the creature stands in that gives him his Title to the promise. Some Saints have more grace from Christ than others, and so have more skill to improve these promises than their weaker Brethren, whereby their present profits and incomes from the promise are greater: But they have no more interest in Christ, than the other, and consequently, the Title of the weak Christian is as true to the promise, as of the strong. Shall the foot say, Because I am the lowest member of the body, therefore the tongue will not speak for me, or the head take care of me? We will grant thee to be of the least and lowest rank of Christians; yet thou art in Christ, as the foot is in the body. And Christ hath made provision in the promise for all that are in him. We disfigure the promises when we make them look askint, with an eye upon one Saint, and not on another, whereas they belong to all; *He that believes on the Son, hath everlasting life, John 3. 36.* Who now is there meant? Only he that believes above doubting? I trow not: He that bids us receive the weak in faith, will not himself reject them.

SECT. III.

Fourthly, Be much in meditation of the promises. Whence is it that the poor Christian is so distressed with the present affliction that lies upon him, but because he misseth more on his trouble, than on the promise? There is that in the promise which would recreate his spirit, if he could but fix his thoughts upon it. When the crying child once fastens on the Teat, and begins to draw down the Milk, then it leaves wrangling, and falls asleep at the breast. Thus the Christian ceaseth complaining of his affliction, when he gets hold on the promise, and hath the relish of its sweetness upon his heart. *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* When a swarm of Bees dislodge themselves, they are all in confusion, flying here and there without any order, till at last they are Hived again, then the uproar is at an end, and they fall to work peaceably as before. Truly even so the Christian will find it with his own heart. God in the promise is the souls Hive, let the Christian dislodge his thoughts thence, and presently they run ryot, and flie up and down as in a fright at the apprehension of the present affliction or temptation that lies upon him, till he can recollect himself, and settle his heart again upon the promise, and then he recovers his former peace and composure. Hence the Spirit of God founds a retreat to the troubled thoughts of afflicted Saints, and calls them off from poring on that which royle them, into God, where alone they can be quiet and at ease, *Psal. 37. 7. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* And David, finding his soul (like the Dove while flying over the waters) without all repose, calls it back into the meditation of God and his promise, as the only Ark where it could find rest, *Psal. 116. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul.* The Christians Heart is of that colour, which his most a-

biding constant thoughts dye it into. Transient, flitting thoughts, be they comfortable or sad, do not much work upon the soul, or alter his temper into joy or sorrow. Neither poyson kills, nor food nourisheth, that doth not stay in the body. No, then the affliction soaks into the heart, and imbibeth the Christian's spirit into perplexing fears and disconsolate dejections, when his thoughts lie sleeping in his sorrows from day to day, when like *Her* in the Gospel, he is bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, that he cannot raise his Heart from the thought of his cross and tryal to meditate on any promise that should refresh him. Such there are, God knows, whom Satan and their own pensive hearts keep such close prisoners, that no comfortable meditation is suffer'd to speak or stay with them. And again on the other hand; then the promise works effectually, when it is bound upon the Christian's heart, when he wakes with it, and walks with it. No pain he feels, no danger he fears, can pluck him from this breast, but as *Sampson went on his way eating of the honey comb*, so he feeding on the sweetness of the promise. Here is a Christian that will sing when another sighs; will be able to spend that time of his affliction in praising God, which others (whose thoughts are scattered and spilt upon what they suffer) too commonly bestow on fruitless complaints of their misery and discontented speeches which reflect dishonourably upon God himself. Let it be thy care therefore, Christian, to practise this duty of Meditation. Do not only exchange a few words with the promise, as one does with a friend passing by at his door: But invite the promise, as *Abraham did the Angels, Gen. 18.* not to pass away, till thou hast more fully enjoyed it. Yea, constrain it, as the *Disciples did Christ*, to stay with thee all the night of thy affliction. This is to acquaint our selves indeed with God, the ready way to be at peace. This is the way the Saints have taken to raise their faith to such a pitch, as to triumph over the most formidable calamities: *My beloved (saith the Spouse) shall lie all night between my breasts.* That is, when benighted with any sorrowful afflicting providence, she will pass away the night comfortably in the meditation of his love and loveliness, his beauty and sweetness. Never will the Christian come to any kindly heat of comfort in his spirit, till he takes this *Abiding* of the promise into his bosom to cherish him, and this will do it indeed. A soul that hath learnt this Heavenly Art of Meditation, will feel no more the extremity of any affliction, than you do the sharpness of the cold weather, when you are sitting by a good fire, or lying in a warm bed. It was a notable speech of *Julius Palmer, an English Martyr*, to them (saith he) that have their mind fetter'd to the body, as a Thief's foot is to a pair of Stocks, it is hard to die; but if any be able to separate his soul from his body, then by the help of God's Spirit, it is no more Mastery for such a one, than to drink his Cup. He meant, if the creature be able to elevate his mind and thoughts above his sufferings by heavenly Meditation on the great and precious promises, then it were nothing to suffer. Such a one his soul is in heaven, and a soul in heaven feels little what the flesh meets with on Earth. Here, O ye Christians, is the gloriouslest

riouflest Prospect to be seen on this side Heaven! When the soul stands upon this *Pisgab* of Meditation, looking by an eye of faith through the Prospective of the promise, upon all the great and precious things laid up by a faithful God for him; It is easie to despise the Worlds love and wrath when there, but alas it is hard for us to get up thither, who are so short breath'd, and soon tyred with a few steps up this Mount of God. O let us all cry out, as once *David*, *Set me upon the Rock that is higher than I!* And with him in another place, *Who will bring me into the Strong City? wilt not thou, O God?* So, Who will lift us up to this high, holy Hill of Meditation; higher than all the surging waves that dash upon us from beneath, where we may see all our creature-enjoyments drowned, yet our selves not wet-shod? wilt not thou, O God? Yes, our God would do this for us, would we but shake off our sloth, and shew by parting with our *Mandrakes* to purchase his Company, that we highly prize the same. My meaning is, would we but frequently retire from the World, and bestow some of that time in secret waiting upon God, which we lavish out upon inferiour pleasures, and entertainments of the creature, we should invite Gods Holy Spirit to us. Let a wicked man set up a lust for his thoughts to dally with, and the Devil will soon be at his Elbow to assist him. And shall we not believe the holy Spirit as ready to lend his helping hand to a holy Meditation? Doubtless he is. Spread thou thy sails, and the Spirit will fill them with his heavenly breath: Be but thou the Priest, lay the Wood and Sacrifice in order, and fire from heaven will come down upon it. Be thou but careful to provide fuel, gather from the promises matter for Meditation, and set thy thoughts a work upon it, and the Spirit of God will kindle thy affections. While I was musing (saith *David*) the fire burned, *Psal.* 39. 3. *Isaac* met his Bride in the fields, and the gracious soul her beloved, when she steps aside, to walk with the Promise in her solitary thoughts.

SECT. IV.

Fifthly, Plead the promises at the Throne of Grace. This must not be disjoyned from the former. Indeed as the Ingredients of an excellent Receipt do not work the cure severally, but as tempered together; so these directions being social means, must not be severed, but joyntly observed. And this Direction I am now speaking to, besides an universal influence it hath upon all the other, is linked by an especial affinity to the former. In vain do we charge the Gun, if we intend not to let it off. Meditation filleth the heart with heavenly matter, but prayer gives the discharge, and pours it forth up on God, whereby he is overcome to give the Christian his desired relief and succour. The Promise is the Bill or Bond, wherein God makes himself a Debtor to the Creature. Now, though it is some comfort to a poor man that hath no money at present to buy bread with, when he reads his Bills and Bonds, to see that he hath a great Summ owing him; yet this will not supply his present wants, and buy

him bread. No, it is the putting his Bond in suit must do this. By meditating on the promise thou comest to see, there is support in, and deliverance out of affliction engaged for: But none will come, till thou commencest thy suit, and by the prayer of faith callest in the debt, *Psal.* 69. 32. *Thou heart shall live that seek the Lord, Psal.* 34. 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened.* God expects to hear from you, before you can expect to hear from him. If thou restrainest prayer, it is no wonder the mercy promised is retained. Meditation it is like the Lawyers studying the case in order to his pleading it at the Bar: When therefore thou hast viewed the promise, and affected thy heart with the riches of it, then ply thee to the Throne of Grace, and spread it before the Lord. Thus *David*, *Psal.* 119. 49. *Remember thy Word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

SECT. V.

Sixthly, When thou hast sued the promise, act thy faith on the power and truth of God for the performance of it, and that against sense and reason which rise up to discourage thee: For as thy faith is feeble or strong on these, so wilt thou draw little or much sweetness from the promises. The Saints safety lies in the strength and faithfulness of God who is the Promiser; but the present comfort and repose of an afflicted soul, is fetcht in by faith relying on God as such. Hence it is, though all believers are out of danger, when in the saddest condition that can befall them, yet too many of them alas are under fears and dejections of spirit, because their faith acts weakly on a Mighty God, timorously and suspiciously on a faithful God: *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!* *Mat.* 8. You see the Leak at which the water came in to sink their spirits, they had little faith. It is not what God is in himself, but what our apprehensions at present are of God, that pacifies and comforts a soul in great streights. If a man fear the house will fall on his head in a storm, though it be as unmoveable as a Rock, yet that will not ease his mind till he thinks it so. Were a man under the protection of never so faithful a friend, yet so long as his head is full of fears and jealousies to the contrary, that he will at last leave and cast him off, this man must needs have an uncomfortable life, though without cause. You see then of what importance it is to keep up the vigour and vivacity of thy faith on the power and truth of the promises; and if thou meanest to do this, banish Sense and Reason from being thy Counsellors. How came *Abraham* not to stagger in his faith, though the promise was so strange? The Apostle resolves us, *He did not consider his own body, Rom.* 4. 19. And what made *Zacharias* reel? He made Sense his Counsellor, and thought he was too old for such news to be true. This is the bane of faith, and consequently of comfort in affliction. We are too prone to carry our faith with *Thomas*, at our fingers ends; and to trust God no further than our hand of sense can reach. It is not far that sense can reach, and but little further that Reasons pur-blind eye can see. God

is oft on his way to perform a promise, and bring joyful news to his afflicted Servants, when Sense and Reason conclude their case desperate. These three, *Sense, Reason, and Faith*, are distinct, and must not be confounded. Some things we know by sense, which we do not understand the reason of, as the sympathy of the *Loadstone* with *Iron*, why it draws that the baser metal, and not *Gold*: And the *Mariners Needle* espousing the *North* point rather than any other. Some things we apprehend by *Reason*, that are not discern'd by *Sense*. As the magnitude of the *Sun's* body to exceed the *Circumference* of the *Earth*, which the *Eye* being *Judge*, may be almost cover'd with ones *Hat*: And other things clear to faith, that duncce and pose both *Sense* and *Reason*. *Paul* knew by faith in that dismal *Sea* storm, where all hope of being saved was taken away (that is, *Sense* and *Reason* being *Judges*) not a man should lose his life, *Act. 27. 25*. Be of good cheer, for I believe that it shall be even as it was told me. When the *Angel* smote *Peter* on the side, and bad him arise quickly and follow me, he did not allow sense and reason to reply and cavil at the impossibility of the thing. How can I walk that am in Fetters? Or to what purpose, when an *Iron Gate* with-stands us? But he riseth, and his chains fall off; he follows, and the *Iron Gate* officiously opens it self to him. Say not, poor *Christian*, 'Tis impossible to bear this affliction, or pass that temptation; let faith follow the promise, and God will loose these knots, that *Sense* and *Reason* tie. *Luther* bids, *Crucifige illud verbum, Quare*, *Crucifige* that word, *Wherefore*. Obey the Com-

mand, and ask not a reason why God enjoyns it. It is as necessary to bid the *Christian* in great afflictions and temptations, to crucifie the word *Quomodo*: How shall I go through this trouble, hold out in that assault! Away with this *How shall I*? Hath not the great God who is faithful, given thee promises enough to ease thy heart of these needless fears and cares, in that he tells thee, *He will never leave thee nor forsake thee; His grace shall be sufficient for thee; Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*. And an hundred more as comfortable assurances from the lip of truth to stand betwixt thee and all harm. Why then dost thou trouble thy self about this improbability and Mountainous difficulty that *Sense* and carnal *Reason* heap up, and interpose to eclipse thy comfort from thy approaching deliverance? Shut the windows, and the house will be light, as the *Jewish Proverb* saith. Judge not by *Sense*, but by *Faith*, on an Omnipotent God, and these Bug-bears will not scare thee. *Credere improbabilia vigoris est intellectus, sicut amare damnosam & ignominiosam vigoris est affectus, Parisiensis de fide*. It is the highest Act of our Understanding, to believe those things which seem most improbable; as it is the highest Act of Love, for *Christs* sake to take pleasure in those things that bring pain and shame with them. For as in the latter, we deny our selves the satisfaction of our carnal desires which goes near to flesh and blood; so in the former we deny our carnal Reasonings, that would be disputing against Gods power and Strength.

CHAP. XXX.

The whole Discourse on this piece shut up with an Exhortation to the Ministers, to whom this Sword is especially committed.

Use. **T**O the Ministers, into your hand this Sword of the Word is given in an especial manner: Unto you the Ministry of it is committed; God hath not left it at random to all; that who will may publickly preach the Gospel. That which is every bodies work, is no bodies: He hath therefore set up a standing Office with Officers in his Church, on whom he hath laid this burthen, and from whom he expects an account; *2 Cor. 5. 20*. He hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. As a Prince Commissionates this or that man to be his Embassador. O *Timothy*, keep that which was committed to thy trust, *1 Tim. 6. 20*. See here, and tremble at the charge which is deposited in your hands. You are Embassadors from the great GOD to treat with poor sinners concerning their eternal peace upon those Articles which are contained in the Gospel. You are his Under-workmen to rear up his Temple in the hearts of men, and to lay every stone by the Line and Rule of this Word. His Stewards, to give his Family their portions in due season, and all your provision to be taken out of this store-house. In a word, you are his Shepherds to lead and feed his flock, and that in no other than these green pastures.

Now if the peace be not concluded, the Embassador is sure to be called to an account where the fault lies: If the house be not built, or go to decay; wo to the negligent Workman. If the Family starve, what reckoning will the Steward make? If the sheep wander, or die of the Rot through thy neglect, who shall pay for the loss, but the idle shepherd?

Now in order to the discharge of this your publick trust, I shall only point at two duties incumbent on you both, with a reference to this Word left in your hands. One to be performed in your Study, the other in your Pulpit.

SECT. I.

First, In your study acquaint your self with the Word of God. That which may pass for diligence in a private Christians reading and search into the Scripture, may be charged as negligence upon the Minister. The study of the Scriptures is not only a part of our general Calling (in common with him) but of our particular also; in which we are to be exercised from one end of the week to the other. The Husbandman doth not more constantly go forth with

Unless he ploughs in the closet
he will not reap in the pulpit

with his Spade and Mattock to perform his day labour in the field, than the Minister is to go and dig in this Mine of the Scripture. He is not to read a Chapter now and then as his worldly occasions will permit; or steal a little time from his other Scholarly studies to look into the Bible *in tranſitu*, and bid it farewell: But it must be his standing exercise, his plodding work; all other must stoop to this. Suppose thou shouldst know what *Plato*, *Aristotle*, (with the rest of the Princes of worldly Learning) have writ, and hadst incircled all the Arts within thy circumference, but art unskilful in the Word of righteousness; thou wouldst be *Paul's* unlearned person; as unfit to be a Minister, as he that hath read all the body of the *Law* is to be a *Physician*, if ignorant of this Art. I do not here intend to nourish the vain conceit of those sons of Ignorance, who think Humane Learning unnecessary for a Ministers furniture. Truly without this, we should soon come to our old *Mumpsimus*, and run into the Babarism of former times. I have read of one *Beda*, that disswaded *Francis* the First, a *French King* (and that when Learned *Budeus* was present) from his Princely resolution of setting up Professors of Languages in his University: Saying, The *Greek Tongue* was the Fountain of all *Heretics*: But the man was found to understand not a word of *Greek* himself. Indeed few or none will speak against Learning, but those that have not so much of it, as to make them understand its use. I dare not bid Ministers (as some Fanaticks have done) burn all their books but the Bible. No, but I would exhort them to prefer it above all their other books, and to direct all their other studies, to furnish them with Scripture-knowledge; as the Bee that flies over the whole Garden, and brings all the honey she gets from every flower therein into her Hive: So should the Minister run over all his other books, and reduce their Notions for his help in this. As the *Israelites* offer'd up the Jewels and Ear-rings borrowed of the *Egyptians* to the service of the *Tabernacle*. *Bene dicta Philosophorum, sunt pecunia Christianorum*. And certainly there are such Jewels to be borrowed even from them, as may become the ear of a Christian, so they be refined and Gospellized. Thus the *Captive Virgin*, *Deut. 21*, when her head was shaved, her nails pared, and her garments changed, might be taken into an *Israelites* bosom. Religion and Learning revived together. The light which *Erasmus* brought into the Schools, helpt *Luthers* labours in the Church. But to return to the Exhortation in hand: Oh let us that are Ministers of the Gospel, give up our selves to the study of the Word. We are, as one well calls us, but *Younger Brethren* to the *Apostles*. Ministerial gifts were left them by Christ, as the inheritance by the Father to his eldest Son and Heir. But we must work for our Living. They had their knowledge of the Word, as *Jacob* his Venison, brought to their hand without hunting; but if we will know the mind of God, we must trace it out by our diligence: But ever taking Prayer in our company. This I am sure was *Paul's* charge to *Timothy*, Give attendance to reading, *1 Tim. 4. 13*. Follow thy book close, O *Timothy*. And *verſ. 13*. Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly

to them: *in totus tibi, in his totus sis*, be wholly taken up therewith. And mark why, *That thy profiting may appear to all*. That is, that thou maist appear to be a growing Preacher to those that hear thee. Oh how shall the people grow, if the Minister doth not! And how shall he grow, if he doth not daily drink in more than he pours out! That Minister must needs spend upon the flock, that hath no comings in from a constant Trade in his Study. If the Nurse doth not feed, and that more than another, she may soon bring her self and child into a Consumption: As we would not therefore see the souls that hang on our breasts, languish for want of Milk, or our selves faint in our work, let us endeavour our recruits be suitable to our experience. Study and pray, pray and study again. Think not your work is done for all the week, when the Sabbath is past. Take a little breath, and return to thy labour; As the Seeds-man that sits down at the Lands end to rest himself awhile, and then rises up to go before his Plough again. We have reason to be more choice of our time than others, because it is less our own; there is none in thy Parish, but have a share in it. We are Thieves to our peoples souls, when we do not Husband it to their best advantage. All are yours, whether *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephus*; yours for the service of your faith. Is the Parent bound to Husband his estate and time for the provision of his children? And should not the spiritual Father have as natural an affection to his people? How great a labour this must needs be both to mind and body, did they understand, they would both more pity, and encourage their Minister in their work. God move your hearts to it, whom he hath blessed with faithful Labourers: Help them in their study for you, by easing them of their worldly cares for themselves. Some people may thank themselves that their provisions is so mean, by being accessory to the Ministers distractions in his work, and diversion from his Calling: For by their oppression or purloining his Livelihood, they force him in a manner to turn worldly: and the time which he should spend in providing bread for their souls, is laid out to get bread for his families bodies.

SECT. II.

Secondly, In the Pulpit use no other Sword but this, and handle it faithfully. Remember whose Errand thou bringest, and deliver it,

First, Purely.

Secondly, Freely.

First, Purely: And that in a threefold respect. Pure from Error: Pure from Passion: Pure from Levity and Vanity.

First: Pure from error. Think it not enough your Text is Scripture, but let your whole Sermon be also such, I mean agreeable to it. Thou art an Embassadour, and as such bound up in thy instructions. Take heed of venting thy own Dreams and Fancies in God's Name. *Jer. 23. 28*. He that hath my Word, let him speak it faithfully. That is, purely, without embasing or mingling it with his own dreams: So he expounds himself, What is the Chaff to the Wheat? Faith the Lord. All is Chaff, besides

the pure Word of God; and what hath it to do to be blended with it? Such a one may fear lest God from heaven should give him the Lye while he is in the Pulpit. O stamp not God's Image on thine own Coyn. We live in High-flown times, many people are not content with truths that lie plain in the Scripture; and some to please their wanton Palates, have sublimated their notions so high, till they have flown out of the fight of the Scripture, and unawares run themselves with others into dangerous errors. Be well assured it is a truth, before thou acquaintest thy people with it. If thou wilt play the Mountebank, chuse not the Pulpit for thy Stage. Make not experiments upon the souls of thy people, by delivering what is doubtful, and hath not abode the tryal of this Furnace. Better feed thy people with sound Doctrine, though plain meat, than that thou should'st with an outlandish dish, light on a wilde gourd that brings Death into their Pot.

Secondly, Pure from Passion. The Pulpit is an unseemly place to vent our discontent and Passions in. Beware of this strange fire. The man of God must be gentle and meek, and his words with meekness of wisdom. The Oyl makes the Nail drive without splitting the Board. The Word never enters the heart more kindly, than when it falls most gently: *Ride thou prosperously, because of truth and meekness*, Psal. 45. Be as rough to thy peoples sins as thou canst, so thou beest gentle to their souls. Dost thou take the rod of reproof into thine hand? Let them see, that love, not wrath, gives the blow. Nurses are careful that they do not heat their Milk, knowing it breeds ill blood in the child that sucks in; the Word preached comes indeed best to a warm heart, but if there goes a feverish heat withal, it breeds ill blood in the Hearers thoughts; and prejudice to the person makes him puke up the Milk. God knows I speak not against the Ministers zeal, so it be from above, pure and peaceable. Save all thy heat for God, spend it not in thine own cause. Admirable was Moses his meekness in this respect. An high affront he received, and at their hands from whom he least deserved it, Aaron and Miriam, Numb. 12. 3. but he did not presently retort upon them, it was his own cause, and it was enough God heard it: But when a sin was committed immediately against God, this meek man can be all of a flame; *Who is on Gods side? Who?* He may take most liberty in reproving his peoples sins against God; that takes least liberty in his own cause, and who hath a grave ready to bury injuries done to himself in.

Thirdly, Pure from levity and vanity. The Word of God is too Sacred a thing, and preaching too solemn a work to be toyed and played with, as is the usage of some, who make a Sermon nothing but matter of Wit, and to flaunt it forth in a garish discourse. What is this to the business of preaching? Their Sermon is too like a childs Baby, from which if you take the Dressing, the rest is worth nothing: Unpinn this Story, take off that gaudy phrase, and nothing is left in the Discourse. If we mean to do good, we must come not only in Word, but with

Power. Satan budes not for a thousand such Squibs and Wit-cracks. Draw thou therefore the Sword out of thine own fine Scabbard, and strike with its naked edge: This you will find the only way to pierce your Peoples consciences, and fetch blood of their sins. I do not here speak against the use of those parts which God hath given unto any: Nor against the fitting and laying our discourse so as it may most insinuate into our peoples affections, and steal into their hearts, by the gratefulness it finds with their ear. This is our duty. *Ecclesiast. 12. 9. Because the preacher was wise, he sought to find out acceptable words.* Not rude, loose, and indigested stuff, in a slovenly manner brought forth, lest the flattery of the Cook should turn the stomachs of the Guefts. The *Apothecary* mixeth his potion, so as his Patient may take it down with less regret, if not with some delight. But still he hath a care that he weakens not its purging operation, by making it over-pleasant to the palate. As they were acceptable words, so upright, *Words of truth*, vers. 10.

Secondly, As purely, so freely. O take heed of enslaving the Word of God to thy own lust, or anothers will, though the greatest in thy Parish. *In a steward it is required, that he be faithful*, 1 Cor. 4. 2. Now the preachers faithfulness stands in relation to him that intrusts him. It is very unlikely that a Steward in giving out provision, should please all the servants in the house; such Officers have least thanks when they do their work best! He that thinks to please men, goes about an endless and needless work. Man's words will not break thy bones. A wise Physician seeks to cure, not please his Patient. He that chides when he is sick for the bitterness of the Potion, will conn thee thanks for it when he is recovered. The Apostle passeth by the thoughts of men as a thing inconsiderable, not worthy the interrupting of him in his work. *With me it is a very small thing I should be judged of you*, vers. 3. of the fore-quoted place. As if he had said, It shall be known at the great Audit, when my Master comes to reckon with me, whether I have been faithful: And 'tis time enough to have my name righted, when he will vindicate his own. No doubt it was a great temptation to Micaiah, when Ahab's Messenger, by colloquing with him, endeavoured to bring him in his message over unto the Kings sense; but mark his Noble Answer, *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith, that will I speak*. Some think Micaiah was that disguised Prophet that denounced Judgement against Ahab for Benhadad's dismissal, and that now he was fetched out of Prison; for the King bids, *Carry him back unto Ammon the Governor*, 1 Kings 22. 26. If so, then Micaiah had the advantage by one flattering Sermon to have gotten his liberty, and the Kings favour to boot: Yet to the dungeon he will go again, rather than prostitute the Word to Ahab's lust. Blessed Paul was of the same mind, 2 Tim. 2. 9. *Wherein (speaking of the Gospel) I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the Word of God is not bound.* As if he had said, They shall never make me enslave that neither in Prison, nor at the Block. No doubt Paul

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might

might have been free, could he have been content the Word should have been bound: But he was too faithful to procure his liberty with imprisonment of the Truth by a sinful silence. If ever it was a time of Temptation to Ministers, and there were need to stir them up in it to keep the Word of Gods Patience, it is in these last dreggy days of the World, of which it is prophesied, *Men shall not endure sound doctrine.* Now therefore to bear witness to the Truth, and to make full proof of their Ministry in such a perverse and froward generation, needs more greatness of spirit than flesh and blood can help them to. It is no tryal for a Minister to speak Truth freely among its friends, but among those that despise it,

and are enraged with the Messenger for delivering his Errand. This made the confession of our Lord so glorious, 1 Tim. 6. 13. It was before Pontius Pilate, a bloody enemy against Him and the Truth he witnessed to. Therefore our People may well bear with us when we speak freely in Gods Name; yea, though we come upon their ground, and our Message rises their consciences: We have it in our Commission, Jer. 6. 27. *I have set thee for a Tower and Fortress, that thou mayst know and try their way.* If a Warrant lyes but in a Constables hand to search your house, you cannot be angry with him for doing his Office, because you dare not stand betwixt him and the displeasure of his Prince, should he neglect it.

EPHES. 6. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints.*

Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright

WE have at last set before you the Christian in his Armour; And now he wants nothing to furnish him for the Bartel, or enable him for the Victory, but the presence of his General to lead him on, and bring him honourably off again by the Wisdom of his Conduct. Which that he may obtain, the Apostle sets him to praying, *Praying always, &c.* As if he had said, You have now, Christian, the Armour of God: But take heed thou forgettest not to engage the God of this Armour by humble prayer for your assistance, lest for all this you be worsted in the fight. He that gives you the Arms, can only teach you to use them, and enable you to overcome by their use. I am not ignorant that some make this of Prayer, a piece of Armour, and to be reckon'd as a part of the Panoply. The truth is, it matters not much in what notion we handle it, whether as a distinct piece of Armour, or as a duty and means necessarily required to the use of our Armour. The latter I shall follow. Partly because it hath no piece of material Armour (as the other all have) allotted to it for a resemblance; as also, because by the connexion it hath (not with the last preceding words only, but) with the whole discourse of the Armour, it seems to be superadded as a general duty influential upon all the pieces fore-named; and may be read with every piece. Take the Girdle of Truth, praying with all

prayer, &c. Having on the Breast-plate of righteousness, praying with all prayer, &c. and the same of the rest. The Christian's Armour will rust, except it be furnished and scoured with the Oyl of Prayer. What the Key is to the Watch, that Prayer to our graces, it winds them up, and sets them a going.

In the words Observe,

First, The Duty commanded, *Prayer*; with the end for which it is appointed, viz. As a help to all his graces, and means to carry on his War against Sin and Satan, *πρὸς τὴν μάχην, Praying.*

Secondly, A Directory for Prayer, wherein we are instructed how to perform this duty in six distinct Heads.

First, The Time for Prayer, *Praying always.*

Secondly, The kinds and sorts of Prayer, *With all prayer and supplication.*

Thirdly, The inward principle of Prayer from which it must flow, *In the Spirit.*

Fourthly, The guard to be set about the duty of Prayer, *Watching thereunto.*

Fifthly, The unwearied constancy to be exercised in the duty, *With all perseverance.*

Sixthly, The comprehensiveness of the duty, or persons for whom we are to pray, *For all Saints.*

CHAP. I.

Prayers usefulness and necessity for the Saints defence in his warfare shewn, and one Reason given of the Point.

WE begin with the first, the Duty in general, together with the connexion it hath with the whole preceding discourse of the Armour, implied in the participle *πρὸς τὴν μάχην, Praying.* That is, furnish your selves with the Armour of God, and joyn

prayer to all these graces for your defence against your spiritual enemies.

So that the point deducible from this, is,

SECT. I.

Doct. That Prayer is a necessary duty to be performed by the Christian, and used with all other means in his spiritual warfare. This is the silver Trumpet, by the sound of which he is to alarm Heaven, and call in God to his succour, *Numb. 11. 35.* The Saints enemies will not fall, till God riseth; and God stays to be raised by their prayer, *Psal. 68. 1. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.* Prayer, it is a Catholick duty, and means to be made use of in all our affairs and enterprizes. What Bread and Salt are to our Table, that Prayer is to the Christian in all his undertakings, enjoyments, and temptations. Whatever our meal is, Bread and Salt are set on the Board: And whatever our condition is, Prayer must not be forgot. As we dip all our morsels in Salt, and eat them with bread; so we are to act every grace, season every enjoyment, mingle every duty, and oppose every temptation with Prayer. It hath been the constant practice of the Saints in all their dangers and streights, whether from enemies within or without, from sin, Devils, or Men, to betake themselves to the Throne of Grace, and draw a line of Prayer about them; accounting this the only safe posture to stand in for their defence. When God called Abraham from Haran into a strange Country, where he wandered from place to place amidst strangers, who could not but have him in some suspicion (considering the Train and Retinue he had) and this their suspicion create many dangers to this holy man from the Kings round about; Now it is observable, what course Abraham takes for his defence: You shall find in his removes from place to place, the memorable thing recorded of him, is, That he erected an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord, *Gen. 12. 7, 8. chap. 13. vers. 3, 4.* This was the breast-work he raised, and entrenched himself in. When he had once by prayer cast himself into the Arms of God for protection, then he made account that he was in his Castle. But what need Abraham have put himself so often to this trouble? Had he not the security of Gods promise when he set forth, That God would bless them that blessed him, and curse them that cursed him? And had he not faith to believe God would be a God of his Word to perform what he had promised? We confess both. But neither Gods promise, nor Abrahams faith thereon gave any Superfeudas to his duty in prayer. The Promise is given as a ground of faith, and faith as an encouraging help in prayer; but neither intended to discharge us of our duty, and save us the labour of that work. And what Abraham did, the same have all the Saints ever done. The greatest spoils which they ever got from their enemies, was in the field of Prayer. If Moses send Joshua into the Valley against Amaleck, himself will be on the Mount to storm Heaven by his prayer, while he is engaged in fight with the enemy below; and the Victory 'tis plain was not got by Joshua's Sword, so much as Moses his prayer. Jehoshaphat when he had near a Million of men Muster'd for the field (besides his Garrisons that were all well appointed)

yet we find him as hard at prayer, as if he had not had a man on his side, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee, 2 Chron. 20.* Now if these Worthies when they had but flesh and blood, men like themselves to contest with, yet did fetch in their help from Heaven, and make such use of Prayers Auxiliary force, and that when others help were not wanting, lest they should be found under the neglect of an indispensable duty, and prevalent means in order to their defence: How much more doth it behove the Christian, both in point of duty, and prudence, to take the same course in his spiritual War against Principalities and Powers! For the Saints graces when best trained and exercised, are without Prayer far less able to stand against Satan, than they, with their Military preparation, were to repel the force of men like themselves. Watch and pray (saith our Saviour) lest you enter into temptation, *Mat. 26. 41.* The not keeping this pass, gave the enemy Satan a fair occasion to come in upon them. For we see, not taking Christs counsel, they were all (though holy men) shamefully foyled. Most of them shifted for themselves by a Cowardly flight (while they left their Lord in his enemies hands:) And he that thought to shew more courage than his Fellows, at last came off with deeper guilt and shame than them all, by denying his Master, who was even then owning him in the face of death, yea his Fathers wrath. And it is observable, that as they were led into temptation through their own neglect of prayer, so they were rescued and led out of it again by Christs prayer, which he mercifully laid in before-hand for them, *Luke 22. 32. I have prayed, that thy faith fail not.* But that which above all commends this duty to us, is Christs own practice, who besides his constant exercise in it, did upon any great undertaking (wherein he was to meet opposition from Satan and his instruments) much more abound in it. At his Baptism, being now to enter the stage of his Publick Ministry, and to make his way thereunto through the fierce and furious assaults of Satan (with whom he was to grapple as it were hand to hand after his forty days solitude) we find him at prayer, *Luke 3. 21.* which prayer had a present Answer, Heaven opening, and the Spirit descending on him, with this voice, saying, *Thou art my well-beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased,* *vers. 22.* And now Christ marcheth forth undauntedly to meet his enemy, who waited for him in the Wilderness. Again, When he intended to Commission his Apostles, and send them forth to preach the Gospel, which he knew would bring the Lion fell and mad out of his Den, as also derive the worlds wrath upon those his Messengers, He first sets his Disciples on praying, *Mat. 9. 38.* and then spends the whole night himself in the same work before their Mission, *Luke 6. 12.* But above all, when he was to fight his last Battel with the Prince of this World, and also conflict with the wrath of his Father now Arm'd against him, and ready to be poured upon him for mans sin (whose cause he had espoused) on the success of which great undertaking, depended the saving or losing his Mediatory Kingdom, O how then did he bestir himself in prayer! It is said, *He prayed more earnestly*

earnestly. As a Wrestler that streins every vein in his body; so He put forth his whole might, *with strong crys and tears to him that was able to save him from death*, Heb. 5. 7. and was heard, so that he won the field, though himself slain upon the place; the spoils of which glorious Victory believers do now divide, and shall enjoy to all eternity. And what is the English of all this, but to shew us both the necessity, and prevalence of Prayer? Without this, no victory to be had, though we have our Armour, but this with that will make us Conquerors over all.

S E C T. II.

First, Now to proceed and shew why Prayer is so necessary a means with our other Armour for our defence.

The first Reason is taken from the co-ordination of this duty with all other means for the Christians defence, and that by divine appointment. He that bids us *take the Girdle of Truth, Breast-plate of Righteousness, &c.* commands also not to neglect this duty. Now what God joyns, we must not sever. The efficacy of co-ordinate means lies in their conjunction. The force of an Army consists not in this Troop, or that one Regiment, but in all the parts in a Body. And if any single Troop or Company shall presume to fight the enemy alone, what can they expect but to be routed by the enemy, and punished by their General also? Let not any say, they use this means and that; if any one be willingly neglected, the golden chain of obedience is broke: and *Bonum non nisi ex integris*. As to a good Action there is required a concurrence of all the several ingredients and causes: so to make a good Christian, there is required a conscientious care to use all appointed

means: He must follow the Lord fully, not make here a Balk, and there a Furrow. It is not the least of Satans policy to get between one duty and another, that the man may not unite his forces, and be uniform in his endeavour. Few so bad as to use no means, and not many so faithful to God and themselves as conscientiously to use all. One, he pretends to sincerity, and dares appeal to God that he means well, and his heart is good; but for the Breast-plate of Righteousness, it is too heavy and cumbersome for him to wear. Another seems very just and righteous, so that he would not wrong his neighbour, no not of one penny to gain many pounds. But as for faith in Christ, this he never looks after. A third boasts of his faith and hope, as if he did not doubt of his salvation: But as for the Word of God that should beget and encrease it, he cares not how seldom he looks on it at home, or hears it in the publick. And a fourth, he hath this to say for himself, That he is a constant hearer, his seat at Church is seldom found empty, and at home the Bible is often in his hands: But as for Prayer, his Closet, could it speak, would bear witness against him, that he seldom or never performs it. This half-doing will prove many a souls whole undoing. *Samuel* ask'd *Jesse*, *Are here all thy Children?* though but a stripling wanting, he must be sent for, before he'll sit down: So may I say to many that are very busie and forward in some particular duties and means, Is here all that God hath given thee in charge? if but one be wanting, Gods blessing will be wanting also: And as that son was wanting of *Jesse's*, which God did intend to set the Crown upon; so that duty and means which is most neglected, we have cause to think is the means which God would especially Crown with his Blessing upon our faithful endeavour.

C A A P. II.

The influence Prayer hath on all the graces of a Saint shewn: And is the second Reason of the Point.

2. **T**He second is taken from the influence that Prayer hath upon all our graces: And that in a double respect. It will help to evidence the truth of grace, and also advance its growth.

S E C T. I.

First, This duty frequently and spiritually perform'd will be a means to evidence the truth of our graces. And this is of no small importance to the Christian, when he hath to do with the Tempter; for that which he mainly drives at, is to bring the Christian into a suspicion of himself, as to the work of grace in him, thereby to overturn the very foundation of his hope, and put him to a stand in his endeavours. He indeed will have little list to go on, that fears he is not in his right way. I have heard that Politicians can make use of a State-lye (though the credit of it lasts but a little while) for great advantage to their designs. And he that learns them this art, makes much more use of it himself to fur-

ther his designs against the Christian. Because he could not keep Christ in the Grave, therefore he raiseth a lye, to hinder the belief of his Resurrection in the World. And when he cannot hinder the production of grace, he mis reports the work to the Christian, as if all were but a cheat put upon him by his own deceitful heart, which the poor creature is prone enough (Gods knows) to believe; and so though the fear be false and groundless, yet being believed, produceth as sad a confusion to his thoughts, and distress to his spirit, as if it were true. *Jacob* could not have mourned more if *Joseph* had indeed been slain, than he did when there was no such matter: Nor could a wicked wretch easily endure more terror and horror, than some precious Saints have felt, for the time that Satans false report (slandering the truth of their grace) hath found credit with them.

Now in Prayer the Christian stands at great advantage to find out the truth of his state, and that upon a double account.

First,

First, God doth commonly take this season, when his People are pouring out their souls to him, to open his heart to them, and to give his testimony both to their persons and graces. God hath his feasting hours, in which his Spirit comes and bears witness to his Childrens state and grace. And this of Prayer is a principal one. Where was it that God so marvellously dignified, and if I may so say, Knighted Jacob with that new Title of Honour, *Thou shalt be called Israel*, but in the field of Prayer? What was the happy hour in which the Angel knockt at Daniels door to let him know how God loved him? was it not when he was knocking at Heaven-door by his prayer? *Dan. 10. 23. At the beginning of thy supplications the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved.* When got the Woman of Canaan the sight of her faith, not only that it was true, but also strong? *O Woman great is thy faith!* but when her heart was carried forth so vehemently in prayer? Yea Christ himself heard that miraculous voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son*, when he was lifting up His in Prayer to heaven, *Luke 3. 21.*

Secondly, The duty of Prayer affords a demonstrative Argument for the truth of that souls grace which spiritually performs it. The Spirit of God when he testifies to the truth of a Saints grace, useth to joyn issue with the Saints own spirit, *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit.* Now the testimony which the Christians own spirit gives for him, is taken from those vital Acts of the new creature that operate in him: such as sincerity, godly sorrow for sin, love of holiness, and other of this nature are. Now no way do these and other graces more sensibly discover themselves to the Christians view, than in Prayer. Here sincerity shews it self in the Christians plain-heartedness to confess all his sins freely without extorting, and nakedly without extenuation or reservation; when there is no false box in the Cabinet of the soul to lock up a darling sin in. Holy David, *Psal. 32. having vers. 1. pronounced him blessed that had no sin imputed to him, and in whose spirit there is no guile: vers. 5. gives this instance of his own sincerity, that he acknowledged his sin, and did not hide his iniquity: As also how well he sped thereby. And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Again,* Here doth the Christian give vent to his heart, aking with inward grief for sin. Prayer is the Channel into which godly sorrow pours forth it self, and runs down in brinish tears, while the Christian is accusing himself of, and judging himself for his abominations with deep shame and self-abhorrence. In a word, Here the souls love to holiness flames forth in his fervent vehement desires and requests for grace that can bear no denial, but even breaks for the longing it hath to it. Thus we see a spirit off prayer is both an Argument of true grace, and a means to draw out that grace into Act, whereby its truth may be the better exposed to view. A Spirit of grace and of supplication, are both joyn'd together, *Zech. 12. 10.* the latter doth indicate the former. What is prayer, but the breathing forth of that grace which is breathed into the soul by the holy Spirit? When God breathed into man the

breath of life, he became a living soul: So when God breaths into the creature the breath of spiritual life, it becomes a praying soul: *Behold he prayeth, saith God of Paul to Ananias, Act. 9. 11.* As if he had said, Be not afraid of him, he is an honest soul, thou mayest trust him, for he prays. Praying is the same to the new creature, as crying is to the natural. The Child is not learned by Art or Example to cry, but instructed by Nature; it comes into the world crying. Praying is not a Lesson got by forms and Rules of Art, but flowing from principles of new life it self.

SECT. II.

Secondly, As 'tis a means to evidence, so to encrease grace. The praying Christian is the Thriving Christian: whereas he that is infrequent, or slothful in praying, is a Waster. He is like one that lives at great expence, and drives little or no Trade to bring wherewithal to maintain it.

Now prayer helps towards the encrease and growth of grace, these two waies.

First, As it draws the habits of grace into Act, and exerciseth them. Now as exercise brings a double benefit to the body, so this to the soul.

First, Exercise doth help to digest or breath forth those humours that clog the spirits. One that stirs little, we see, grows purfie, and is soon choak'd up with flegm, which exercise clears the body of. Prayer is the Saints exercise-field, where his Graces are breathed; 'tis as the Wind to the Air to sweep the Soul; as Bellows to the fire, which clears the coals of those ashes that smother them. The Christian, while in this world, lives but in an unwholesome Climate, one while the delights of it deaden and dull his love to Christ, another while the troubles he meets in it damp his faith on the promise: How now should the poor Christian get out of these his distempers, had he not a Throne of Grace to resort to, where if once his soul be in a melting frame, he (like one laid in a kindly sweat) soon breaths out the malignity of his disease, and comes into his right temper again? how oft do we find the holy Prophet when he first kneels down to pray, full of fears and doubts, who yet before he and the Duty part, grows into a sweet familiarity with God, and repose in his own spirit? *Psal. 13. 1.* he begins his prayer, as if it were come to that pass that he thought God would never give him a kind look more; *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?* But by that time he hath exercised himself a little in duty, his distemper wears off, the mists scatter, and his faith breaks out as the Sun in its strength, *vers. 5. I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation, I will sing unto the Lord.* Thus his faith layes the cloth, expecting a feast ere long to be set on; he that even now question'd whether he should ever hear good news from heaven, is so strong in faith, as to make himself merry with the hopes of that mercy, which he is assured will come at last. Abraham began with *sisy*, but his faith got ground on God every step, till he brought down the Price of their lives to ten,

Secondly,

Secondly, Exercise whets the appetite to that food which must be taken before strength can be got; and *causa causa est causa causati*. The Hone that sets an edge on the Husbandman's Sythe, helps him to mow the grass. None comes so sharp set to the Word (which is the Saints food to strengthen his grace) as the Christian that takes Prayer in his way to the Ordinance. The stronger natural heat is, the better stomach the man hath to his meat; Love in the soul is what natural heat is in the body; the more the soul loves the Word, the more craving it is after it. Now as Exercise stirs up the natural heat of the body, so Prayer excites this spiritual heat of love in the Saints bosom to the Word. *Cornelius* is an excellent instance for it; we find him hard at prayer in his house, when behold a vision that bids him send for *Peter* who should preach the Gospel to him, a happy reward for his Devotion! Now see what a sharp appetite this praying soul hath to the Word, he upon this presently posts away messengers for *Peter*, and before he comes, gathers an assembly together (no doubt all of his friends that he could get) there he sits with a longing heart waiting for the Preacher: As soon as ever he sees his face, he falls down at his feet, receiving him with that reverence and respect as if he had been an Angel dropt out of Heaven; presently he sets *Peter* to work, though some may think he passed good manners in putting him to labour after so long a journey, before he had refreshed him with some collation or other; but the good man was so hungry to hear the message he brought, that he could not well pacifie his soul to stay any longer, and like a man truly hunger-bit he is ready to catch at any truth (though never so bitter) which shall be set before him. *Act. 10. 33.* Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. And when the Sermon is done, so favory and sweet was the meal, that he is loth to think of parting with *Peter* before he gets more from him, and therefore beseeches him to stay some daies with him; one Sermon did but make his teeth water for another. O how unlike are they who come reeking out of the world to a Sermon, to *Cornelius* that riseth from Prayer to wait for the Preacher?

SECT. III.

Secondly, Prayer helps our Graces, as it sets the soul nigh to God; in prayer we are said to draw near to God, *Jam. 4. 8.* To come before his presence, *Psal. 110.* In it we have access to the Father, *Eph. 2.* As one that brings a Petition to a Prince, is call'd into his Presence chamber; one of the nearest approaches to God which the Creature is capable of on this side Heaven, which was signified by the *Incense-altar*, that stood so high even within the Vail; Prayer 'tis call'd, *The Throne of Grace*, we come in prayer to the Throne of God, and put our Petition into the very hand of God, as he sits on his Throne in all his Royalty. Now as prayer is so near an approach to God, it hath a double influence into the growth of the Saints Grace.

First, By this near access to God, the Soul is put

the more into an holy awe and fear of that pure and piercing Eye of God, which he sees looking on him; 'tis true, God is ever near us, pray or not pray, we cannot rid ourselves of his presence; but never hath the soul such apprehensions of his presence, as when it is set before God in prayer. Now the soul speaks to God as it were mouth to mouth; and considering how holy that Majesty is with whom he hath to do in prayer, he must needs reverence and tremble before him. Now the natural issue of this holy fear, what can it be but a care to approve it self to God? And this care cherishes every grace; they are carried in its Arms, as the child in its Nurses; it keeps the Girdle of Truth buckled close about his loyns. Oh, saith the Soul, I must either leave praying, or leave doubling and juggling with God by Hypocrisie! It will strengthen the breast-plate of holiness; 'tis not possible that a Christian should walk loosely all day, and be free and familiar with God at night. He that waits on the person of a Prince, will be careful to carry nothing about him, that should be offensive to his Eye, yea afraid lest any thing should come to his Ear, that should bring him under a cloud in his Princes thoughts, and remove him from his place about him; and Courtiers have those that will be always undermining them if they can: And the Christian wants not such an Adversary; for *Satan* is at his right hand at every miscarriage to accuse him unto God, saying, This is your favourite, though he be so devout in prayer, he can do this or that, when the duty is over; and therefore if any in the world have a tie upon them more than others to walk exactly, 'tis they that minister before the Lord in this duty. Princes are more curious of their Attendants, than of others at further distance from them. When *David* shew'd some distraction of mind before King *Achish*, he bids *Away with him, have I need of men that you bring such a one into my presence?* And does a poor mortal man that sits on a Throne of Dust only heapt up, and raised a little above his fellows, take such State on him, as not to bear the discomposure of any before him? How much less will the great God (though he wink for a time at the foul sins of others) brook any unholy behaviour in those that wait so nigh upon him! This, no doubt, made *Cain* run so fast from the presence of God, because he knew that it was no standing so nigh God with such an unholy heart as he carried in his bosome.

Secondly, By the souls near access to God in prayer, it receives sweet influences of grace from God. All grace comes from the God of grace; not only the first seed of grace, but its growth and increment; and God usually seds forth his grace in a way of communion with his people. Now by Prayer the Christian is led into most intimate communion with God, and from communion follows communication. As the warmth the Chicken finds by sitting under the Hens wings cherisheth it; so are the Saints graces enlivened and strengthened by the sweet influences they receive from this close communion with God. The Christian is compared to a Tree, *Psal. 1.* And those Trees flourish most, and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the Sun.

The

The praying Christian is (as they say of the Rhodians) in sole positus: He stands nigh to God, and hath God nigh to him in all that he calls upon him for. And therefore you may expect his fruit to be sweet and ripe, when another that stands as it were in the shade, and at a distance from God (through neglect

of, or infrequency in this duty) will have little fruit found on his branches, and that but green and sower, *Psal. 92. 13, 14. Those that be planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God: They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.*

CHAP. III.

Prayers prevalency with God. The third Reason given of the point.

THirdly, The third Reason why the Christian should joyn prayer to all other means, is taken from the great prevalency prayer hath with God. He will do no great matter for a Saint without prayer, and nothing is too great for him to do at his request. Prayer like Jonathan's Bow (when duly qualified as to the person and act) never returns empty. Never was faithful prayer lost at Sea. No Merchant trades with such certainty, as the praying Saint. Some prayers indeed have a longer Voyage than others; but then they come with the richer Lading at last into the Port. In trading, he gets most by his commodity that can forbear his money longest. So does the Christian that can with most patience stay for a return of his prayer: such a soul shall never be ashamed of his waiting. The promise is as an Assuring-office to secure him his adventure, *1 Joh. 3. 22. O who can express the powerful Oratory of a Believers prayer!* *Voxula Pater formaliter dicta in corde, est eloquentia, quam Demosthenes, Cicero & eloquentissimi in mundo nunquam possunt exprimere. Luther.* This little word *Father*, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of *Demosthenes, Cicero*, and all other so famed Orators in the World. We read of taking heaven by force, *Matth. 11. 12. If ever this may be said to be done, it is in prayer. Cum iudicium & misericordiam extorquamus, faithfullian, We knock at Heaven, and the merciful heart of God lies open, which we bring away with us. And in the same Apology he speaks of Christians, how they went to pray, As an Army doth to besiege a Town, and take it by storm, Coimus in castrum & congregationem, ut ad Deum quasi mansuetam precationibus ambiamus orantes; and then adds, *Hoc vis Deo grata est: This holy violence we offer to God in prayer, is very pleasing to him. Surely, if it were not, he would neither help the Christian so in the work, nor reward him for it when it is done. Whereas he doth both. He helpt Jacob to overcome; Hosea 12. 3. By his strength he had power with God. That is, not by his own, but the strength he had from God. And then he puts honour upon him for the Victory, Gen. 32. 28. Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel, for as a Prince thou hast power with God and men, and hast prevailed. It were easie here to expatiate into a large history of the great Exploits which Prayer is Renowned for in holy**

*Writ, Jam. 5. 17. Isa. 37. Dan. 2. 18. 2 Sam. 15. 31. Esth. 4. 16. Acts 12. 5. Joh. 11. 41. Jonah 2. 2. Josh. 10. 12, 14. 2 Kings 20. 10. Psal. 106. 23. Ezek. 22. 30. This is the Key that hath open'd and again shut heavens. It hath vanquish't mighty Armies; and unlocked such Secrets, as pass'd the skill of the very Devil himself to find out. It hath strangled desperate plots in the very womb wherein they were conceived; and made those Engines of cruelty prepared against the Saints, recoil upon the Inventors of them; so that they have inherited the Gallows which they did set up for others. At the knock of Prayer Prison-doors have open'd, the Grave hath deliver'd up its dead, and the Seas Leviathan not able to digest his prey, hath been made to vomit it up again. It hath stopt the Suns Chariot in the Heavens, yea made it to go back. And that which surpasseth all, it hath taken hold of the Almighty, when on his full march against persons and people, and hath put him to a merciful retreat. Indeed by the power prayer hath with God, it comes to prevail over all the rest. He that hath a Key to Gods heart, cannot be shut out, or stopt at the creatures door. Now prayer moves God and overcomes him, not by causing any change in the Divine Will, and making God to take up new thoughts of doing that for his people which he did not before intend. No, God is immutable; and what good he doth in time for his people, he purposed before any time was. But prayer is said to move and overcome God, because he then gives, what from eternity he purposed to give upon their praying to him. For when God Decreed what he would do for his Saints, he also purposed that they should pray for the same. Yet will I be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them, Ezek. 36. 37. Prayers Midwifery shall be used to deliver the mercies God purposeth and promiseth. *Hazakiah* understood this when he calls the Prophet to the Churches Labour, and bids, *Because the children (that is, Deliverance) stuck in her birth, that he should therefore lift up a prayer, Isa. 37. 4. And when Daniel had found the full reckoning of the promise (how long it had to go with the deliverance promised for their return from Captivity) perceiving it hastened, he therefore falls hard to prayer, knowing Gods purpose to give, doth not discharge us from our duty to ask, Dan. 9. 3.**

C H A P. IV.

Wherein this Question is Answered, Why God requires prayer for that which He hath promised before to give?

Quest. BUT why doth God impose this upon the Saints, that they should pray for what he hath purposed and promised to give?

Ans. First, That they may be conformable to Christ. The design of God is to make every Saint like Christ: This was resolved from eternity, *Rom.* 8. 29. Now as the Limner looks on the person whose picture he would take, and draws his lines to answer him with the nearest similitude that may be; so doth God look on Christ as the Architype to which he will conform the Saint, in suffering, in grace, and in glory: yet so, that Christ hath the preeminence in all. Every Saint must suffer, because Christ suffer'd: Christ must not have a delicate body under a crucified head. Yet never any suffer'd, or could, what he endured. Christ is holy, and therefore so shall every Saint be, but in an inferior degree. An Image cut in clay, cannot be so exact as that which is engraved on gold. Now, as in other things, so in this, our conformity to Christ appears; that as the promises made to him were performed upon his prayer to his Father; so promises made to his Saints, are given to them in the same way of prayer. *Ask of me* (saith God to his Son) *and I will give thee*, *Plal.* 2. And the *Apostle* tells us, *Ye have not, because ye ask not*. God had promised support to Christ in all his conflicts; *Isa.* 42. 1. *Behold my servant whom I uphold*. Yet he prays with strong crys and tears, when his feet stood within the shadow of death. A seed is promised to him, and Victory over his enemies; yet for both these he is at prayer now in Heaven. Christ towards us acts as a King; but towards his Father as a Priest. All he speaks to God is on his knee by prayer and intercession. In like manner the Saints, The promise makes them Kings over their lusts, Conquerors over their enemies; but it makes them Priests towards God, by prayer humbly to sue out those great things given in the promise.

Secondly, That God may give the good things of the promise with safety to his Honour. Secure God but his glory, and the Saint may have what he will. The very life of God is bound up in his glory. The creatures honour is not intrinsecal to his being. A Prince is a man, when his Crown and Kingdom are gone; but God cannot be a God, except he be glorious; neither can he be glorious, unless he be holy, just, merciful, and faithful, &c. Now that this his glory may be seen and display'd, is the great end he propounds both in making, and ordering of the World, *Prov.* 16. 4. *He made all things for himself*. If there were any one occurrence in the World, which could be no way reducible to the glory of God, it would make the being of a Deity to be questioned. But the All-wise God hath so made, and doth so order all his creatures with their actions, that the manifestation of his glory is the result of all.

Indeed he forceth it from some, and takes it by distress, as Princes do their Taxes from disobedient Subjects. Thus the very wrath of his enemies shall praise him, *Plal.* 76. 10. But he expects the Saints should be active instruments to glorifie him, and like Loyal Loving Subjects, pay him the Tribute of his praise freely, with acclamations of joy and gratitude: Which that they may do, he issueth out his mercies in such a way, as may best suit with this their duty. And that is to give the good things he hath purposed and promised to them upon their humble address in prayer to him.

Now two ways the glory of God is secured by this means.

First, The Saints in the very duty of prayer (when he performs it in a qualified manner) doth highly glorifie God. Prayer as it is *medium gratia*, a Channel of grace, for the conveyeing and deriving blessings from God the fountain into the Cistern of our bosomes: So it is *medium cultus*, a means of worship, whereby we are to do our homage to God, and give him the glory of his Deity. By this we give him the glory of his power. Prayer is an humble appeal from our impotency to Gods Omnipotence. None begs that at anothers door, which he can pleasure himself with at home. And if we thought not God able, we would go to another, not to him. We give him the glory of his Sovereignty and Dominion, and acknowledge that he is not only able to procure for us what we ask, but can give us a right to, and the blessing of what he gives. Therefore Christ closeth his prayer with, *Thine is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, &c.* as a reason why we direct our prayers to God: Because He alone is the Sovereign Lord that can invest us in, and give us Title to any enjoyment. So that it is high Treason against the Crown and Dignity of God, when we either attempt to possess our selves of any enjoyment without praying to him; or when we pray Religiously to any other besides him. By the first, we usurp his Sovereignty our selves, in their language, *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*. And by the second we give away his Kingdom and Sovereignty to another. This was the Devils drift when he would have had Christ fall down and worship him; that thereby he might acknowledge him to have the Rule of the World. Again, By prayer we give him the glory of his free mercy. Men demand a debt, but beg an Alms. When we pray, we renounce merit. See them opposed, *Job.* 9. 15. *Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer; but I would make supplication to my Judge*. We might shew the same in all the other Attributes: But this taste from a few may suffice. And as God essentially considered, receives by prayer an acknowledgement of his Deity: So every Person in the Sacred Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in prayer are honoured.

By

By directing our prayers to *God the Father*, we honour him as the source and fountain of all grace and mercy. We honour the *Son*, in presenting our prayers in his Name to the Father, thereby acknowledging him the Purchaser of the mercies we beg. And the *Holy Ghost* he receives the honour of that assistance which we acknowledge to receive from him for the duty of prayer. For as we pray to the *Father through the Son*, so by the *help of the Spirit*.

Secondly, As God is honour'd in the very act and exercise of this duty duely qualified; so by it the Christian is deeply engaged, and also sweetly dispos'd to praise God for, and glorifie him with the mercies he obtains by prayer.

First, Prayer engageth to this. In prayer we do not only beg mercy of God, but vow praise to God for the mercies we beg. Prayers are called *vows*, *Psal.* 61. 5. *O God, thou hast heard my vows*. That is, my prayers, in which I solemnly vowed praise for the deliverance I begg'd. It is no prayer, where no vow is included. We must not think to bind God, and leave our selves free. God ties himself in the promise to help us; but the condition of the Obligation on our part, is, that we will glorifie him. And upon no other terms doth God give us leave to ask any mercy at his hands. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me, Psal.* 50. 15. Now, what a strong tie doth this lay upon the praying Christians heart, to use the mercies he receives, holily, and to wear with thankfulness what he wins by prayer! The Christian who would be loth to be taken in a lye to man, will much more fear to be found a lyar to God: *Surely they are my people (saith God,) Children that will not lye, so he was their Saviour, Isa.* 63. 8.

Secondly, Prayer is a means to dispose the heart to praise. Prayer and praise, like the *Symbolical* qualities in the *Elements*, are soon resolved each into the other. When *David* begins a *Psalme* with prayer, he commonly ends it with praise: From whence things have their Original, thither they return: From the Sea the river-Water comes, and no Mountains can hinder, but back again to the Sea it will go. That Spirit which leads the soul out of its self to God for supply, will direct it to the same God with his praise. We do not use to borrow money of one man, and pay

it to another. If God hath been *thy strength*, surely thou wilt make him *thy song*. The thief comes not to thank a man for what he steals out of his Yard. And I as little wonder that they do not Glorifie God for or with his mercies, who did not ask his leave by prayer for them. What men do by themselves, they ascribe to themselves. Mercies ill got, are commonly as ill spent: because they are not sanctified to them, and so become fuel to feed their lusts. Hence it is, the more enjoyments they have, the more proud and unthankful they are. But by prayer the Christians enjoyments are sanctified, and the flatulency of them which puffs up others into pride, is corrected; and the same mercies received by prayer, become nourishment to the Saints graces, that putrifie and turn to noysome lusts in the prayerless sinner.

Thirdly, God will have his people pray for what he hath purposed and promised, to shew the great delight he takes in their prayers. As a father, though he can send to his son (who lives abroad) the money he hath promised for his maintenance, yet lets him not have it, except he comes over at set-times for it. And why? Not to trouble his son, but delight himself in his sons company. God takes such content in the company of his praying Saints, that to prevent all strangeness on their part, he orders it so, that they cannot neglect a duty, but they shall lose something by it. *Ye have not, because you ask not*. And the more they abound in prayer, the more they shall with blessings. The oftner *Joash* had smote upon the ground, the fuller had his victory over *Syria* been. As the arrows of prayer are, that we shoot to heaven, so will the returns of mercy from thence be: Yet must it not be imputed to any lothness in God to give that he makes them pray often and long before the mercy comes, but rather to the content he takes in our prayers; he doth all this on a design to draw out the graces of his Spirit in his children; the voice and language of which in prayer, makes most sweet melody, in the ear of God. The truth is, we are in this too like Musicians playing under our window; they play while the money is thrown out to to them, and then their Pipes are put up. And were our wants so supplied by the Answer of one prayer, that we did not suddenly need a new recruit, we would be gone, and God should not hear of us in hast.

CHAP. V.

A sharp reproof to all prayerless souls: With the dismal state that such are in, shewn.

Use 1. **A** Word to those who live in the total neglect of this duty, that are prayerless creatures; such ruines of mankind there are to be found, who pass their wretched dayes like so many Swine, they never look up to heaven, till God lays them on their back; nor are heard to cry in prayer till his Knife is at their Throat. What shall I say to these *Gyants*, and sons of the Earth, that have renounced their allegiance to the God of Heaven! These *Kings of Basban*, who like so many *Metamorphos'd*

Nebuchadnezzars, have lost the heart of a man, and live like as very bruits, as the beasts themselves, who while they feed, take no notice of him that cloaths the field with grass for them! Can I hope they will hear man, who will not acknowledge the God of heaven by praying to him! Surely your case is deplored: What! not pray! Can you do less than by this homage to own God for your Maker? Or less for your own souls, than to beg their life of God, whose hand of Justice is lift up against you? are you

X x x

resolv'd

resolv'd thus to throw your selves into the Devils mouth, without so much as striking one stroak for your defence! If God had required a greater matter at your hands than this, the salvation of your souls would have deserved it: and will you stick at this! God does not put us to the cost of laying down the price of our Ransome, no not so much as to pay our prison-fees; only he bids thee pray, and he will pay: *Their souls shall live that seek the Lord, Psal. 69. 32.* Oh what salt and vinegar will this pour into thy wounds, when in Hell thy conscience shall lie in thy face, and tell thee thou hadst not been there, if thou wouldst in time have humbled thy soul before God, and sought his favour in that way which cost Christ his blood to procure; either thou must be dispossess of this dumb Devil, or undoubtedly it will be thy damnation! And who dies with less pity, than that Malefactor, that stouts it before the judge, and will not so much as down on his knees, or open his mouth to cry for mercy, though the judge on purpose stays to pronounce the sentence, and break up the Court, to see whether his stomach will fall, and his proud spirit stoop to ask his life at his hands! You know how angry Pilate was, when Christ was silent, *Joh. 19. 10.* *Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not, that I have power to crucifie thee, and power to release thee?* Thou alas, poor creature (as Christ told him) he could do nothing for or against him; and therefore Christ neither feared him nor ought him so much service as to bestow a word upon him. The Warrant for Christs death was sealed in Heaven, and he with the rest of Christs enraged enemies, were but Gods servants to do the Execution according to the determinate counsel of God. But how much more reason hath the great God to be provoked by this irreligion and say, *Wilt thou not speak to me? Pray to me? Dost thou not know I have power to save or damn? To deliver thee to the tormentor, or keep thee out of his hands? Or dost thou look that God is bound to save thee whether pray or not pray? If he doth (I promise you) he shall do more for thee than for others; yea, than for his own Son, who made strong cries and supplications to be saved by him.* God hath laid the method of salvation, and think not that he will alter it, and so make a blot in the counsel of his Will for thy pleasure: What he hath written, he hath written: and it shall not be reversed: Yea, though others should be so kind as out of pity to thy soul to pray for thee, yet if thou beest thy self a prayerless creature, thou shalt die the death. If they were Noah, Samuel, and Daniel, that stood up to beg thy life, they should not be heard for thee. Proxy prayers in this case will not prevail. And therefore when the Israelites came a begging to Samuel for his prayers (which good man he easily promised, indeed durst not have forgot them in that, though they had not remembered him of it) mark what Caveat he annexeth, *1 Sam. 12. 24. Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart.* As if he had said, *Do not let me to do that for you, which you will not do for your selves; 'Tis not all the interest my prayers have in heaven will keep the wrath of God from falling on you, if you be wicked and Atheistical: therefore fear the Lord, and serve him: That is, pray*

and obey him. Fear oft denotes the worship of God, *Gen. 31. God is called the fear of Isaac; i. e. The God whom he fear'd and worshipt: So Jer. 10. 7. Who will not fear thee, thou King of Nations? That is, worship thee, rather than stocks and stones! Because the worshipping of God results from our reverence and fear we have of him: Christ was heard in that he feared, Heb. 5. 7. ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπακοῆς, That is, his religious fear expressed in those his strong cries, which he groaned forth to God in his agony. And therefore so long as you are prayerless, you live without the fear of God. And what will not such a wretch dare to do! Even any thing that Satan shall command him, though it be to go to a Wizard. When Saul had given over enquiring after God, we hear him by and by knocking at the Devils door, and asking counsel of a Witch. Oh! take heed of living so near the Tempter! If Satan might have his will, surely it would be this, That the creature might live prayerless; for by this he should do the greatest spight possible to God, in that he makes the creature set him at naught in all his attributes, and have the greatest advantage against the sinner himself. Now he hath thee as sure as the Thief hath the Traveller, when he hath thrown him into a Ditch fast bound, and stopt his mouth, that he cannot cry to others for help. In a word, Thou art free booty for Satan, who may now satisfie his lust upon thee. He that prayeth, invites God into his further acquaintance, and soon shall have it: as we see in Paul, who had Ananias sent from God to him. But he that lives in the neglect of this duty, gives the Devil fuller possession of him. Thou art the man of all others most fit for him to make an Atheist of. I should not wonder that the Devil perswades thee there is no God, who already livest in such defiance against him, as cannot but make the belief of a Deity dreadful to thy thoughts. Herod was soon perswaded to cut off John's head, because when he was alive, he so troubled and nettled his conscience. And 'tis to be feared, thou wilt easily be drawn to attempt the stifling all thoughts of a Deity, from whom thy criminous conscience expects to hear nothing that can please thee: Yea, 'tis probable thou hast too much of the atheist in thee already, or else thou durst not deny God that part of natural worship, which they that know him least give unto him. I am sure the Scripture lays this Brat of irreligion at the door of Atheism, *Psal. 14. 1. The fool there would fain perswade himself there is no God, and when he hath got so far the Mastery of his Conscience as to blot God out of his Creed, he then soon leaves him out of his Pater Noster, ver. 2.**

Quest. But it may be some will ask me, Whether I think that any do, where the Gospel is preached, neglect prayer on this account of Atheism?

Ans. Truly I do; and which is more, I think there are worse Atheists to be found under the Meridian-light of the Gospel, than in the darkest Nook in America (where yet this day never broke.) As weeds grow rankest in richest grounds, and fruits ripest in hottest Climates: so do sins grow to the greatest height, where the Gospel-Sun climbs highest. *Who is blind but my servant? and blind as the Lords servant, Isa. 42. 19.* Who such Atheists as those that have

have their eyes put out by the light of the Gospel? The poor *Indians* little knowledge of a God is for want of light, which may be cured, when it is brought to them: But if a judiciary *Atheism* (as that in Go-

spel-times and places commonly is) falls upon a soul for rebelling against the light, this is incurable; here the very vivise faculty is perished, and the eye bored out.

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation to the Saints, that they would abound in this Duty.

Use 2. **T**O the Saints; Be you provoked to ply this Oare more diligently than ever: If this be neglected, an universal decay of all your graces follows. When the Ports and havens of a Kingdom are blockt up, that the Merchant cannot go forth, there follows a damp on all the in-land Trade, so that an enemy needs not strike a stroak, but only stand still to see them eat up one another. The *Psalmist* tells us of a stream which makes glad the City of God, *Psalm 46*. The promise is this stream, upon which the Saints have all their Livelihood brought up to their very doors; if this be kept open, Satan cannot much distress them, which then is done, when they can send out their prayers on this stream to heaven; but if once this Trade be stopt, then they are hard put to it. 'Tis observ'd of our Neighbours the *Netherlands*, that whereas other Nations use to be made poor by War, they have grown rich with it. Because with their Wars they have enlarged their trade and Traffique abroad. And if thou Christian wouldst thrive by all thy temptations, thou must take the same course; whatever thou dost, starve not thy Trade with heaven. God hath (to make thee more diligent in this Duty) so ordered things, that all the treasure of the promise is to be conveyed to thee, in this bottom of prayer. This is like the *Merchant Ship*, *Prov. 30*. It brings thy food from afarre. If thy mercies were of the growth of thy own Countrey, thou might'st spare a Voyage to heaven: But alas poor Creature, when thou art best laid in, and thy store-house fullest, if no forreign supplies should come unto thee from heaven, how soon wouldst thou be brought with the poor Widow, to eat thy last Cake and die! It was not her little meal in her Barrel, nor oyle at the bottom of her Cuse, but Gods blessing multiplying them, that made them hold out so long: So, not thy present grace, strength, or comfort, but Gods feeding these with a new Spring, that thou must live upon: Now cease praying, and the Oyle of Grace will cease running: *Ye have not because you ask not*. And when the store is spent, the City must yiled. As thou wouldst not therefore fall into Satan's

hands, lose not thy interest in God thy best Allie, for want of preserving a good correspondence with him at the throne of grace. Now for the better pursuit of his Exhortation, some Counsel would not be amiss in order to thy driving this trade of Prayer more successfully. *Satan*, who hath received so many shameful overthrows by the Saints Prayers, that he trembles at the force of this great Ordinance of heaven. This is the voice, the mighty voice of God in his *S'ts* which shakes those Mountains of Pride, divides the flames of their fiery temptations, and makes them cast forth their abortive counsels to their shame and disappointment, *Oh Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness, 2 Sam. 15. 31*. This one prayer made both *Achitophel* a fool, and him that set him on work also, defeating the wisdom both of man and Devil. Satan hath such an impresson of dread upon him, (from the remembrance of what he hath suffered from the hands of Prayer) that he will turn every stone, and try every way to obstruct thee in it. *What do we?* (said the *Pharisees* concerning *Christ*,) *for this man does many Miracles, if we let him alone, the Romans will come, and take away both our Place and Nation*. Satan cannot deny, but great wonders have been wrought by prayer. As the spirit of prayer goes up, so his Kingdom goes down. It is of the *Royal Seed*, he can no more stand before it, than falling *Haman* before rising *Mordecai*. And therefore seeing this is like to do thee such great service against him, it behoves thee the more to defend it from his stratagems. Because the great artillery of an army is so useful to it, and formidable to the enemy, therefore it hath a strong guard set about it.

Now Satans stratagems against prayer, are of three kinds.

First, If he can, he will keep thee from prayer. If that be not feasible:

Secondly, He will strive to interrupt thee in Prayer. And

Thirdly, If that plot takes not, he will labour to hinder the success and return of thy prayer.

CHAP. VII.

Two Stratagems whereby Satan labours to starve the weak Christian from the Duty of Prayer.

First, His first design upon thee, will be to keep thee from Prayer. To effect which, he wants not his stratagems, many Objections that he will start, and discouragements he will throw in thy way to this

duty, hoping that if thou stumblest not at one, yet he may make thee fall by another, and be sick of thy enterprize before thou settest upon it. And which is worst, thou wilt find a party in thy own bosom too

ready to listen to what he saith, yea to take up his arguments and maintain the dispute against thy engaging in this work. We shall pick a few among many, and put an answer into thy mouth against he comes.

S E C T. I.

Stratagem. First, What! thou pray! if thou dost, thou wilt but play the hypocrite, and better not pray at all, than never the better! Nay, possibly thy own misgiving heart may suggest the same, or at least so far credit his charge, as to make thee waver in thy thoughts what thou should'st do, pray or not.

Now to arm thee against this, Consider,

The defensive against it. First, Thou art but afraid thou should'st play the Hypocrite, if pray: but thou wilt certainly prove thy self an Atheist, if thou dost not; and that is it which he would have. I hope thou art wiser than to neglect a known duty upon a jealousy thou hast of miscarrying in it; to lie down in a known sin (yea, so broad a one as brands him for an atheist that continues in it) for fear of meeting a Lyon (and may be but a Bugbear) in the way of thy obedience to an indispenfable command.

Secondly, Thou art in the less danger of playing the hypocrite, because of thy fear. Some bodily diseases indeed are catch'd with a fear and fancy. He is most like to have the Plague or Pox, that fears most he shall have them; but none are so safe from sin, as they that fear the falling into it most. The truth is, I would desire no better argument to prove thee sincere than this, To fear thy hypocrisy. Believe it, if this be the great trouble of thy soul, the Devil hath more reason to fear thy sincerity, than thou thy hypocrisy: and in all likelihood this it is, that makes him to scare thee from Prayer; because thou would'st scare him so much by thy praying. If thou wert an hypocrite (as he pretends) himself would invite thee to it, yea make a Lane for thee, rather than that thou should'st not come to the work; and when thou art risen from thy knees, he would thank thee for thy pains, because he knows God would not. The hypocrite does him more service than God. You do not believe sure, that the Devil was any great enemy to Jezebel's fasting, nay I doubt not, but he put it into her head, that she might thereby mock both God and man. Her fast was the Devils feast.

But Thirdly, If thou findest more cause to fear thy playing the hypocrite, than I who am a stranger to thy heart have reason to do (Who indeed can know so well how thy own heart beats as thy self?) I say; If thou fearest this be the sin which is most likely to make a breach upon thee in thy Duty, do as Moses, who slew the Egyptian to rescue the Israelite: destroy the sin, that thou may'st rescue thy soul from the neglect of Duty. Thou hast a very fair advantage by the intelligence God graciously gives thee, whence thy danger is most likely to come, of falling on thy enemy, and taking the fuller revenge on him before thou setst about the work of Prayer. Get but thy heart into a hatred

of this odious sin, and fixed resolution against it, and with Gods Blessing it shall neither be able to hurt thee, nor hinder thy prayer from finding welcome with God.

S E C T. II.

Stratagem. Secondly, Oh but, saith Satan, thou hast no gifts for prayer, leave that for them that can perform this duty after a better fashion.

What meanest thou by gifts? If a rowling flowing tongue, which some *The defensive* have, whereby they are able on a sudden with a long continued discourse, to run over all the heads of Prayer in a clear method, and cloath every Petition with apt & moving expressions; we will suppose thou hast not this gift; but God forbid, that the want of this should keep thee from praying, or make thee go the less comfortably to the duty. The want of these, shew only thou hast not so good a head, but doth not the least hinder thy heart to be as gracious as theirs: and better of the two, that the defect should be found in thy head, than in thy heart. Thy invention indeed in prayer by this will be more barren, but thy heart may be as fruitful over the few broken disjointed sentences that by piece-meal fall from thee, as theirs with their eloquent Oration. Thy language will not be so trim and gaudy, but thy soul and spirit may be as sound, yea more upright than many of those will be found, who charm the ears of those that joyn with them, by the Musick their words make. 'Tis possible a man may have a rotten body under a gorgeous suit; and, *sub hac purpura lingua pannosam conscientiam*, Under this bravery of language a poor ragged conscience. Who had not rather be the healthful man in plain cloaths, than unsound and diseased, under rich Apparel? Sincere with mean gifts, rather than rotten-hearted with raised parts. We do not count him the best Patriot in the Parliament-house, that plays the Orator, and makes more *Rhetorical Speeches* than others, but he that takes with the best side, and whose Vote is sure not to be wanting to carry on a righteous Cause. It is not the *Rhetorick* of the Tongue, but the hearty *Amen*, which the sincere soul seals every holy request withall, that God values; and this thy honest heart will help thee to do; which his head cannot do for him, that wants this sincerity. It is not the fairness of the hand that gives the force to the Bond, but the person whose hand and seal it is; if it could, a *Scrivener* might make all the Country his Debtors. Gifts may make a fair writing (which the hypocrite can do) but faith and sincerity maketh a valid prayer; and this can only lay claim to the good things of the promise. In a word, Sincere soul (for so I take thee to be) and if such, though thou hast not these praying gifts as others, yet thou hast as much interest in Christ, *the unspeakable gift*, 2 Cor. 9. as any of them all. And for thy everlasting encouragement know, it is not those gifts in them, but this gift of God to thee and all believers, which is the Key that must open Gods heart, if any mercy be got thence: Yea, this gift must sanctify their glistening gifts, as the Altar did the Gold upon it, or else they will be an Abomination to the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

Satans Policy to keep a Soul from this Duty, upon a pretence of present indisposition of Body.

Strat. T Hirdly, Satan and the flesh too have their dilatory excuses to take thee off thy duty when thy stated usual time comes about for the performance of it. Dost thou never, Christian, when thou art addressing thy self to the Throne of grace, hear Satan and thy flesh whispering in thine ear, (Christian) What art thou going to do? This is not a fit time for thy praying; stay for a more convenient season. Here the Devil seems modest: he saith not, pray not at all, but not now: Not dissolve, but adjourn the Court to a fitter time.

Answ. Now beware Christian, thy foot is near a snare: If thou takest the Devils counsel, and waitest for his convenient season, may be it will prove like *Felix his convenient season* for calling *Paul* to a further hearing, which, for ought we find, never came about. When the flesh or Satan beg time of thee, it is to steal time from thee. They put thee off duty at one time, on a design to shut thee out at last from this duty at any time. The Devil is a cunning Sophister, he knows a modest beggar may sooner obtain the little he asks, than he that sawcily asks that which carries more unreasonableness in the request. *Jephtha* who yielded to his Daughters desire for a few months reprieve, would, 'tis like, not have heard her, had she begg'd a full release from her fathers vow. A gracious soul is under a vow to call upon God; he knows such a motion would be flung back with the Saints abhorrence upon his face, should he at the first dash bid him never pray more, and wholly leave his acquaintance with God; therefore he would seem very willing he should pray: Ay! by all means, saith he, I would not have you turn your back on your best Friend, but now is not so fit a season.

Two fair pleas Satan hath to cheat the Christian of his present season and opportunity for prayer.

The Christians present indisposition to prayer; or some worldly business that then stays to be dispatcht.

First, From his present indisposition to pray. Stay Christian, saith the Temper, till thou art in a better temper for duty, and thou wilt pray to more purpose. Better not write, than scribble; leave the work undone, than go about it when thy hand is out.

Now there is a *double indisposition*, which both Satan and the flesh make use of to colour their pretence with.

First, Indisposition of body: Some distemper lies at present on that; and *Scripture* (say these) tell thee, God loves *mercy rather than sacrifice*. And it cannot be denied but the *Scripture* will reach as far as the body, for Gods commands are not cruel to it.

Answ. But to help thee out of this snare, tell me plainly, How great is thy distemper of body? Happily thou art not so ill, but thou canst go about thy worldly business, though with some groans and complaints in the same: But when thou shouldst pray, then thy head akes and shoots more than before. Art thou well enough to go into thy shop, and not to pray in thy Closet? Canst thou waddle so far as to the Market, and not pray at Home? canst thou overcome thy distemper so far as to traffique with the World, and not to trade with heaven? Surely all is not right; God is but little beholden to thee: May not God say, I deserve thy company as well as the World? But suppose thou beest right-down sick, and quite laid up from meddling in thy worldly employments; yet will this excuse thee from visiting the Throne of grace? God takes thee out of the shop to show thee the way into the Closet: he knocks thee off thy worldly Trade, that thou mayst follow thy heavenly the more close. Thou art not, indeed, able to pray in a continued discourse, as in health; neither doth God expect it: Here that *Scripture*, which the Devil would have thee abuse, is pat, and suitable to thy present state, *God loves mercy rather than sacrifice*. Yet now, if ever, is the time for thee to shoot those *jacula precatoria*, darts of ejaculatory prayer to God. When our body breaths shortest, it breaths quickest and ofttest. Though thou canst not pray long, yet thou mayst pray much in these pathetical Sallies of thy soul to heaven. The Christian should have his Quiver full of these arrows, which though short, go with a force. Christ never prayed more earnestly than in his agony: which Prayer was of this nature, *Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, *Matth.* 26. 39. And after a little Pause (for Nature to take some breath, by reason of that unspeakable burthen which then lay upon it) he shoots the same Dart again to heaven thrice one after another, *vers.* 44.

In a word, Christian, though thou canst not pray as thou wert wont, yet thou canst desire others to pray for thee and with thee: We are bid to send for the *Elders*, yea and beg prayers of others too. So pitiful is God to us, that when through our own weakness, we are disabled from delivering our own conceptions in prayer, that then we may bring forth (as *Leah*) on others knees; when we cannot go our selves as we were wont to the work, we may be carried on the shoulders of their prayers, and flie on the wings of their faith to heaven.

C H A P. I X.

Satan's Stratagems to keep the Christian from Prayer, upon pretence of present indisposition of heart.

S E C T. I.

SEcondly, Oh but secondly, thou mayest say, 'Tis not the sickness of thy body, but the deadness of thy heart, and indisposition of thy ~~soul~~, that keeps thee from duty. Thou wouldst fain have that in a better frame, and then thou wouldst not be long a stranger to it.

Ans. First, Let me ask thee (Christian) what thou hast found (in the observation of thy own heart) to be the fruit that hath grown from such put-offs and excuses. Hath neglect of duty at one time, fitted thee for it at another? I believe not. Sloth is not cured with sleep, nor laziness with idleness. If our leg be numb, we walk, and so it wears off. Satan knows, if thou playest the Truant to day, thou wilt be more loth to go to School to morrow. Give the flesh a little scope and liberty, by this unlacing thy self, and it will endure less to be straitened afterwards. There is something to do to bridle a wanton Beast, when he hath got the bit once out of his mouth. The Spouses Coat sate very easie when on her back, and unwilling no doubt she was to be stript; but when once by a wile of Satan, she was perswaded to put it off, how loth was she then to get it on again! And therefore when ever you are turning from this or any other duty meerly upon this account, consider well what is like to follow. One of these two will come of it; Either thou wilt see thy sin, and return with shame and sorrow for thy neglect: and is it not less trouble to pray now, than upon such terms afterwards? A Heathen could say, he would *not sin to buy repentance*; and shouldst not thou have more wisdom to know which is a bad bargain for thy soul than he? Or *Secondly*, This neglect will beget another, and that a third, and so thou wilt run further in arrears with thy conscience, till at last thou givest over all thoughts of renewing thy acquaintance with God, because thou hast discontinued it so long.

S E C T. I I.

Secondly, Examine from whence this present indisposition comes, and probably thou wilt find reason to charge it either upon some sinful miscarriage in thy Christian course, or on thy neglect of those preparatory means through which thou art to pass into the performance of this duty.

First, See whether thou hast not been tampering with some sin knowingly. There is an Antipathy betwixt sinning and praying, partly from guilt, which makes the soul shy of coming into Gods sight, because conscious of a fault. The child that hath mispent the day in play abroad, steals to Bed at Night, or plays least in sight for fear of a chiding, or worse, from his father. And also as it doth roile, and dis-

order the heart. Sin and Prayer are such contraries, that 'tis impossible at one stride to step from one to another. It is an ill time when the Fountain is stoppt, or muddied, to go to draw Water thence. If the Work-mans Tools be blunt or gapt, no work can be well done, till a new edge be set on them. 'Tis the Devils policy, thus to disturb and unfit the Christian for duty, that he may leave it undone. And therefore let thy *first* care be to keep the fountain of thy heart clear all the day long, as remembring, that from it those holy affections, which in prayer thou art to pour forth to God, must be drawn. Look thou lendest not any power of thy soul to be Satan's instrument in sins course foul work, lest thou find it out of case when thou art to use it in this spiritual service. A good servant will not have her Dishes or pots foul, when they should be used, but to stand clean, and bright, upon the Shelf, to be ready against they are call'd for. And so is the true Christian Characterized. 1 Tim. 2. 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a Vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared for every good work.* But *Secondly*, If thou findest guilt to be contracted, and thence a fear to come so nigh God, as this duty will bring thee; yea an estrangement also upon thy heart from this work, Thy best way is speedily to renew thy repentance, and so thy faith both for pardoning mercy and purging grace. New breaches are made up better than long quarrels. Green wounds healed easier than old sores. Spots washed out sooner when newly got, than when engrained by long continuance. Ply thee to the Throne of Grace. Water the Earth, if thou canst, with thy tears, and fill heaven with thy sorrowful sighs for thy sin; but by no means shift off the duty on this pretence; for that is not the way to mend the matter, but make it worse. *Jonah* did ill to consult his credit rather than the exaltation of Gods Mercy; and how he should come honourably off with his Embassage, than how the name of the great God his Master that sent him might be magnified. But he did worse when these sinful thoughts stirred in him (which he should have humbled himself for) made him run away from his Masters work also. Thus, Christian, 'tis ill done of thee to make a breach in thy holy course by tampering with any sin; but thou wilt commit a greater, if thou turnest thy back on God also in that Ordinance where thou shouldst humble thy self for thy former sin. Can one sin be a good argument for committing another? Thou hast fallen into sin in the day, wilt thou not therefore pray at night? Surely it were better to beg of God forgiveness of this, and more grace, that thou mayst not do the like or worse to morrow. Neglect of duty, is not the way to help thee out of the Pit thou art in, nor keep thee from falling into another. Take heed thou runnest not thy self further into temptation

tion, Now is the time for the Devil to set upon thee, when this Weapon is out of thy hand. The best thou canst look for, is a storm from God to bring back thee his Run-away Servant to thy work again: and the sooner it comes, the more Merciful He is to thee.

S E C T. III.

Secondly, If upon thy faithful enquiry thou findest not thy heart reproach thee to have indispos'd thy self for duty by any known sin in the course of thy life, and yet thy heart continues lumpish and unfit for prayer, then probably thou wilt take thy self tardy in thy actual preparation to the duty. Hast thou therefore solemnly endeavoured by suitable meditations, to blow the Coal of thy habitual grace, which though not quenched by any gross sin, yet may be deadned, and covered with some ashes, by thy being over-busie in thy worldly employments? The Well is seldom so full, that Water will at first Pumping flow forth; neither is the heart commonly so spiritual after our best care in our worldly converse (much less, when we somewhat over-do therein) to pour it self into Gods bosom freely, without some labour to raise and elevate it: Yea, oft the Springs of grace lie so low, that only pumping will not fetch the heart up to a praying frame, but arguments must be poured into the soul (like so many Pails of water into the Pump) before the affections arise. Hence are those Soliloquies and Discourses, which we find holy men use with their own hearts to bring them into a gracious temper, suitable for communion with God in Ordinances; *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his Holy Name: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, Psal. 103. 1, 2.* It seems *David* either found or fear'd his heart would not be in so good a frame as he desired, that he redoubles his charge; he found sure his heart somewhat drowsie, which made him thus rub his eyes, and rouse up himself, now going to God in this duty; sometimes calling and exciting the heart will not do, but the heart must be chid, and taken uprondly: So *David* was fain to deal with himself at another time, *Psal. 42. Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Heavy birds must take a run before they can get upon the wing. 'Tis harder to get a great Bell up, than to Ring it when 'tis rais'd; and so is it with our hearts, harder work we shall find it to prepare them for duty, than to perform it, when they are got into some order. Now hast thou endeavoured this? If not, how canst thou make this a pretence to wave the duty because thou art indisposed, when thou hast not used the means to have thy clog taken off? This is, as if one should excuse himself, for not coming to the Feast unto which he was invited, because Forsooth he was not drest, when indeed he never went about to make him ready.*

S E C T. IV.

Thirdly, But Thirdly, If thou canst answer to the former Question, and in some uprightness say, that thou hast not neglected preparatory means, but yet

thy indisposition and deadness of heart remains: Though this case be not so ordinary, yet 'tis possible that a Christian may walk on those coals of Meditation, which at one time would set his soul all on fire, and put his graces into a flame, yet at another he may find little warmth from them. And we will suppose this to be thy case: therefore consider that God may and doth sometimes conceal his enlivening presence; till the soul be engaged in the work. And would it not grieve thee to lose such an opportunity? How oft hast thou found thy self at the entrance into a duty becalmed, as a ship which at first setting Sail, hath hardly wind to swell its Sails (while under the shore and shadow of the Trees) but meets a fresh gale of Wind, when got into the open Sea? Yea, didst thou never launch out to duty as the *Apostles* to Sea, with the Wind on thy teeth, as if the Spirit of God, instead of helping thee on, meant to drive thee back, and yet hast found Christ walking to thee before the duty was done, and a prosperous Voyage made of it at last? *Abraham* saw not the Ram which God had provided for his Sacrifice, till he was in the Mount. In the Mount of Prayer God is seen; even when the Christian does oft go up the Hill towards duty with a heavy heart, because he can as yet have no sight of him. Turn not therefore back, but on with courage, he may be nearer than thou thinkest on, *In that same hour*, saith Christ, *it shall be given unto you, Math. 10. 19. In the day (said David) that I cried, thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul, Psal. 138.* 'Tis no more than the promise gives us security for, *The way of the Lord is strength.* Just as it is with a man, who at first going out on a journey feels a lassitude and feebleness in his Limbs; but the further he goes, the more strength he gathers, as if there arose strength out of the ground he walks on. Truly the Saints find this in Gods way; *Psal. 119. 55, 56. I have remembered thy Name in the Night, and have kept thy Law; this I had because I kept thy precepts.* His meaning is, by doing his best endeavour to keep them, he got this by the hand, to be able to keep them better, and he thinks himself so well paid (in this) for his pains, that he glories in it, *This I had.* So the Saint hath this for praying, he gets his heart in tune to pray better. We may observe those Children in Scripture, which came of barren wombs, were the greatest comforts to their Parents when they had them. Witness, *Isaac, Samuel, and John.* The greater deadness and barrenness thy heart (to thy own sense) lay under, and the less hope thou hadst to get out of the indisposition, the more joyful will the quickening presence of God be to thee. The assistance that thus surprizeth thee beyond thy expectation, will be a true *Isaac*, a child of joy and laughter. And a double Reason is obvious why God doth thus.

First, From the great delight the Lord takes in pure obedience, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15.* To pray in obedience, is better than barely to pray. This is the Jewel in the Ring of Prayer. Now to pray in pure obedience, is to set upon the duty when there is no assistance visible, or encouragement sensible. To go to duty, not because God puts forth his hand to lead me, but because

cause he holds forth his Precept to command me. As when a General commands his army to march, if then the Souldiers should stand upon terms, and refuse to go, except they have better Cloaths, their Pay in hand, or the like, and then they will march; this would not shew them an obedient disciplin'd armie: But if at the reading of their Orders, they presently break up their Quarters, and set forth, though it be Midnight when the command come, and they without money in their purse, cloaths on their back (leaving the whole care of themselves for these things, to their General, and they only attend how they may best fulfil his command) These may

be said to march in obedience. Thus when a soul after a faithful use of means, finds his heart dead and dull, yet in obedience to the command, kneels down (though the sense of his inability is so great, that he questions whether he shall have power to speak one word to God as he ought) yet had rather be dumb and dutiful, than disobedient in running away from his charge. Here is an obedient soul, and may hope to meet God in his way with that which he cannot carry with him: As the Lepers, who when they went in obedience to Christs command, to shew themselves to the Priest, were cured by the way, though they saw nothing of it when they set forth.

C H A P. X.

His Policy to start some worldly business to be just then dispatcht when the Christian's hour for prayer comes, How it may be repelled.

SECONDLY, another fetch that Satan hath to make the Christian put off the duty of Prayer as unreasonable at present, is some worldly business or other that then is to be dispatcht, and therefore suggests such thoughts as these to divert him. I have no leisure now to pray, this business is to be done, and that necessary occasion calls for my attendance, I will therefore adjourn the performance till I can come with more freedom and leisure.

Now to arm thee (Christian) against such dilatory pretences, I shall lay down a few directions.

First, Take heed of overcharging thy self with worldly business, which then is done when thou graspest more thereof than will consist with thy heavenly trade, and Christian calling. God allows thee to give to the world that which is the worlds, but he will not suffer thee to pay the world, that which is due to him. Rob Mary, to lend to Martha; Steal from thy closet to pay thy kitchen. Thy particular calling is intended by God to be a help to thy general, it will therefore be thy sin to make that an encumbrance which is given as an advantage. And that which is it self a sin, cannot be a plea for the neglect of a dutie. That servant would mend the matter but little, who excuseth his not-doing a business his Master commanded, by telling him he had drunk too much when he should have gone about it. Nor will thy apologie for passing thy time of prayer be better that say it thou hadst so much to do in the World, that thou couldst not find time to pray in.

Secondly, Labour to time thy seasons for prayer with discretion in the things of the world; if we have two businesses to dispatch in the same day, we contrive, if possible, that they may not interfere. And certainly a holy providence to forecast how we may reconcile daily the demands of our Closet and Shop, our Devotions and Worldly Employments, by laying out each its portion of time, would ordinarily prevent much disorder and confusion in our walking. The Prophet speaks of the liberal mans devising liberal things. We could not easily want time to pray in,

if our hearts would but perswade our heads to devise and study, how our other affairs might be disposed of without prejudice to our Devotions. That cloth which a Bungler thinks too little for a Garment, a good workman can make one of it, and leave some for another use also. O there is a great deal of art in cutting out time with little loss.

Thirdly, Be sure thou keep'st a right notion of prayer in thy thoughts. Some look upon every minute of time spent in the closet, lost in the Shop, and no wonder such are easily kept from prayer upon any pretended business, who think it a prejudice to their other affairs. But I hope, Christian, thou art better taught. Does the Husbandman mow the lefs for whetting his Sythe? Doth a good Grace before meat spoil the Dinner? No: Nor doth prayer hinder the Christian either in his employments or enjoyments, but expedites the one, and sanctifies the other. All agree, That to the dispatch of a business (as to the winding of a skein of silk) nothing conduceth more, than to begin at the right end of it. And to be sure, the right end of any business is to begin with God, and engage him to help us. *Acknowledge God in all thy wayes, and lean not to thy own understanding, &c.*

Fourthly, The more streights and difficulties thou conquereit to keep thy Communion with God, the more kindly it is taken of God. No Friend is more welcome to us, than he who breaks through many occasions to give us a visit. There is little cost, and so little love in an idle mans visit; he that comes to see us because he hath nothing else to do. Mary was Christs Favourite, who trode the World under her feet, that she might sit at Christs feet. And the Bethshemites, who in their zeal (I confess their case is extraordinary) came out of their very Harvest-field where they were reaping, to offer a Sacrifice to the Lord, 1 Sam. 6. 13.

Fifthly, Be faithful and impartial in considering the importance and necessity of that business which is propounded as an apology for not performing this duty at thy usual season. It cannot be denied, but such a necessary occasion may emerge and fall out, for which

which the Christian may without sin, adjourn the Solemn performance of his Devotions to another more fit time. Who doubts, but a Christian may, when he riseth, go to quench his Neighbours house on fire, though by this he be kept out of his Closet, and detain'd from offering to God that Solemn morning sacrifice of praise and prayer he was wont? Yea, though the occasion be not so extraordinary: If it be *First*, About that which is *lawful* in it self. *Secondly*, Of *importance*. *Thirdly*, *Necessarily*, then to be dispatcht. And *Fourthly*, If it surprizeth us, and we do not bring it upon our selves by our own fault, the duty of prayer may without sin be adjourn'd for a fitter time. But let us take heed of stamping a pretended Necessity on things and actions, only to gratifie our lazy hearts with a handsome excuse, whereby we may both save the pains of performing a duty, and also escape a chiding from our conscience for the non-performance of it. Of all Fools, he is the worst, that is witty to put a cheat on himself, and especially on his soul. Such a one must expect, that the less his conscience barks at present, the more it will bite when it shall be unmuzzled. *Again*, if the occasion be,

as is said, important and necessary, whereby thou art called off from the Solemn performance of this duty at present: Then, *First*, Lift up thy heart in an ejaculatory prayer to God, to guide and guard thee: This is the short Dagger thou art to use for thy defence against temptation, when thou hast no time to draw the long Sword of Solemn Prayer. Thus thou maist pray in any place, company, or employment. A short *Parenthesis* interrupts not the fence of a discourse, but gives an Elegancy to it. And a short ejaculation to Heaven, will not interrupt any business thou art about, but advantage it much. *Secondly*, Be careful to recover this loss which thy worldly business hath put thee to in thy communion with God, by more abounding in the duty upon thy next opportunity. The Tradesman who is kept from his Dinner on the Market day, goes the sooner to his Supper, and eats the freer meal at Night. If you be hindred of your rest one Night by business, you will take it up the next. O that we were as wise for our souls, what we are prevented of at one time, to recover with advantage at another, by a doubled enlargement of our hearts in our Prayers and Meditations!

CHAP. XI.

Satan's Policy to discourage the Christian from Prayer, under a pretence, The mercies he would beg, are too great for him to hope he shall ever receive.

Strat. 3. **S**atan discourages sometimes the Christian when on his way to this duty, from the greatness of those requests which he hath to put up to the Throne of Grace. Thou art going to pray (Christian, will he say) and will nothing serve thee less than pardon of sin, love and favour of God, with eternal life? &c. Surely thou art too free of anothers Purse, and too kind to thy self, if thou thinkest to be welcome at Gods door with so bold an Errand. This is a Boon reserved for some few Favourites, and darest thou think so well of thy self, that thou art one of them?

The defence. Now to Arm thee, Christian, against this, that thou maist neither be kept from the duty, nor go misgivingly to it upon this account, *The greatness of thy request*, Ponder upon these five Considerations, which will amount to a full Answer to this Cavil.

SECT. I.

First, Oppose the greatness of that God thou art going to make thy address unto, against the greatness of thy request. We are bid, *Deut.* 32. 3. *to ascribe greatness to our God*: And if ever, especially when kneeling down to pray. Wert thou to put up thy request to some Puny Prince, or petty creature, thou hadst reason to consider, whether thy Pitcher were not too great that thou wouldst have fill'd. Possibly thou maist ask such a one more at one clap, than he is worth. *Help O Lord, my King* (said the Woman in the Famine of Samaria) yet she had not relief; *If the Lord do not help, whence shall I help thee?*

2 Kings 6. Or possibly if he hath power, he may want a heart to part with so much as will serve thy turn; there are many of *Nabal's* name in the World, such Churls, who think every bit of bread lost, that they eat not themselves; yea, some who grutch their own Belly its necessary food. Wert thou at the door of such as those, what couldst thou expect but cold welcome? But remember, he is a great God, great in Power: Thou canst not over-ask; thou maist draw thine Arrow to the head, and yet not over-shoot the Power of God; even when thou hast drawn thy desires to the highest pitch, he will be above thee, *For he is able to do exceedingly above what we can ask or think*. Wouldst thou have thy sins pardoned? Yes, if they were not too great, thou sayest: But can God at once discount such a sum, and discharge so vast a Debt, that hath been gathering many years by a full Trade of constant finning, with so great a stock of means and mercies as I have had, and thereby the unhappy advantage of making the greater return? *Yes*, he is able *abundantly to pardon*, without any wrong to Himself, or controul from any other. The Sovereign Power of Life and Death being in his hands, he is accountable to none, as not for Acts of Justice, so neither of mercy. *Who shall condemn? 'tis God that justifies*, *Rom.* 8. If indeed a man forgive thee a wrong done unto him, thou canst not think thy self therefore acquitted by God; his wrath may still abide on thee. Man cannot give away Gods right. Were a man so kind to forgive the Thief that robb'd him, yet 'tis not in his power to discharge him of the penalty of the Law. But if the Prince, who is the Law-giver, will do it, none can gain-say. If God will

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passe an Act of mercy, thou art free indeed; for the power lies in his hands. Is it any Masterly lust, from whose Tyranny thou would'st beg deliverance? The God thou prayest to, is able to break open thy prison door, and make thee, a poor captive, go out free. He can give these thine enemies as dust to thy Sword, and as driven stubble to thy Bow, yea destroy them with a cast of his eye, *The Lord looked on the Egyptians, and troubled their Host*, Exod. 14. 24. His very look was as heavy as a Millstone about their necks; presently they sank, Horse and Rider, like Lead to the bottom of the Sea. And sin and Satan are no more before God, than were Pharaoh and his Host. In a word, Is it comfort thou would'st ask if it might be had? Oh! know, he is a Creator thou prayest to; though thy heart were as void of comfort, as the Chaos was of light, yet can He with a word, cause a new heaven of joy to arise out of thy confused soul, and make thee in one moment to step out of darkness into light; neither is his mercy less than his power. Oh launch therefore into this bankless bottomless Sea by thy faith; behold the wonders of God in these depths, and do not stand reasoning thy self into unbelief by any uncomely comparisons between God and the narrow-hearted creature; *He is God, and, not man*; none of these defects are to be found in his mercy, which, we impotent creatures, find in our selves. The paleness we see sometimes, is not in the Sun, but from the clouds that interpose. The stars do not blink nor twinkle, as is thought, but we (because of their vast distance, and our weak Organ) cannot behold them with a fixed eye: Nor have the jealousies and fears entertained by tempted souls (to the disparagement of the mercy of God) any foundation in the *Divine Nature*, but are meer *entia rationis*, Bug-bears, which through the darkness of their troubled spirits, and distemperature of a melancholy fancy, Satan hath the advantage of affrighting them with. O beware therefore thou dost not disfigure the sweet lovely face of Gods mercy (which smiles alike upon every poor, penitent, praying soul) while thou fanciest God to have a cast of this his eye, and to look more favourably upon one than another, lest by this you do betray the glorious Name of God to be rent in pieces by your cruel unbelief! If you once come to wrap up God in your hard thoughts as slow to hear, hard to be wrought on with your prayers and tears, truly then Satan may easily persuade you to commit any sin against him, because you expect no mercy from him.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Oppose the promise to thy fears: There is no mercy thou canst desire, but is promised beforehand unto the *Prayer of Faith*; the mercy thou would'st have, is already Voted in heaven, and the Grant past, only God staies for thy coming over to the Throne of Grace, there to lay thy claim to the promise before he issueth it forth. The mercy lies in the womb of the promise, but staves for thy prayer of faith to obstericate, and give it a fair deliverance. *The children are come to the birth* (said *H Ezekiah*)

The promise is big, *wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left*, Isa. 37. That is, if any thing will help, it must be that. What can a Petitioner desire more in his Address to a Prince for some great favour, than to be assured not only the Prince is of a gracious merciful nature, but also that he hath obliged himself to give that which he hath in his thoughts to desire? And shall only the promises of God be counted light and little worth! Have you not heard of such a promise, *Ask, that your joy may be full*? Did ever a vain word drop from the lips of Truth? Doth he make an Order one day, and reverse it another? Are his words Yea, and Nay? And not rather *Yea and Amen for ever*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Beggars use to be quick sighted. *Benhadad's* servants saw light at a little hole; and gather'd from a few kind words which dropp'd from *Abah's* mouth, that there was mercy raked up in his heart towards their Master, which they soon blew up. *Joab* saw *David's* bowels working towards *Absholom* through the casement of his countenance, and therefore lets down the *Widows Parable* as a Bucket to draw out that mercy which lay in his heart, like Water in a deep Well. How much more encouragement hast thou, Christian, to plead with thy God, who art not put to guess at Gods thoughts, but hast the assurance of plain promises for thy good speed! Oh what fools, and how slow of heart are we to believe the good Word of God! If *Moses* supposed his brethren would have understood, by the kind visit he gave them, and his friendly Office in rescuing one single *Israelite* from his Oppressors hand, that God would by him deliver them all; how much more may God expect that his people should understand his purposes of love towards them, when he exposeth his heart to so open a view of their faith by his promise, and hath sealed the truth thereof with so many examples to whom already full payment hath been made of the same? And do we yet read them as once the *Eunuch* that sweet promise, *Isa. 53.* and understand not the meaning of them? Do we yet sit so near our comfort, as *Hagar* by the Well, and our eyes held not to see it? Can we yet walk over the promises as barren ground, when with a little digging into them, we might find a treasure to pay all our debts, and supply all our wants?

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Oppose to thy fears not only the greatness of the promise, but also the valuable consideration upon which they are made. Christ payes for what thou prayest. Thou indeed beggest Alms, but Christ demands the same as debt. God is merciful to thee, but just to him. And therefore (Christian) though it becomes thee to sink thy self beneath the least mercy in thy own thoughts, yet it behoves thee to be tender of Christs credit, whose merit is as far above the greatest mercy thou canst beg, as thou art beneath the least. The father will give you little thanks for casting any dishonourable reflection upon his son, on whom himself hath heaped so much glory; yea, with whose honour his own is so interwoven, that

that whatsoever dishonours the Son, dishonours the Father that sent him.

Now there are three Priviledges purchased for every believer; and none of them can be lost by us without dishonour to him.

First, He hath purchased a liberty to pray; it had been death to come on such an Errand to God, till he had by his blood paved a way, and procured a safe-conduct, *Heb. 10. 17.*

Secondly, An ability to pray as he purchased the Spirit for us, called therefore, *the Spirit of Promise.*

Thirdly, the safe return of our prayers; *Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you, Joh. 16. 23.* Indeed it is his business in Heaven, to own our cause there in open Court, and to present his blood as ready money to be laid down for all his Saints beg, that no demur be made to their requests: So that either thou must blot this Article of Christs *Intercession* out of thy *Creed*, or else put thy self to shame for questioning thy entertainment with God, when thou hast so good a friend at Court to speak for thee.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, The greatness of thy request cannot hinder thy speeding, because they are most welcome that ask most. Who are the persons frowned on at the Throne of Grace, but those who lay out the strength of their desires, and bestow their greatest importunity, for mercies of least weight and worth? *Hosea 7. 14. They have not cryed unto me with their heart when they howled on their beds.* Mark! the Lord did not account that they prayed at all, for all their loud cry, And why, but because he disdain'd their low and drossie spirit, in crying loudest for that which deserved least, as the following words will resolve us, *They assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, and rebel against me; They would have a good Crop, with a full Vintage, and these scraps should serve them, so as not to trouble God for any more.* God, his love and favour are quite left out of the story. May they but have their bellies cram'd, they have all their wish, and leave the other for those that like them better. Oh how God abhors these prostrate souls, and carnal prayers! When men *tishe Mint and Cummin* in their prayers, but neglect the weightier things of the promises, such are an interest in Christ, forgiveness of sin, a new heart, grace here and glory hereafter: Or when they aim at low and

base ends in praying for those things that in themselves are noble and high. And therefore fear not the greatness of thy request; God had rather give thee heaven, than earth; He can more willingly bestow himself on thee that art in love with him, than a crust of bread on another that regards him not. The greater the mercy is thou askest, the greater rent and revenue wilt thou pay him for it. The less he gives, the less he receives. By low requests thou wrongest two at once. Thou art a Thief to thy self in wanting what thou maist have for asking: In bringing a little Vessel, when thou might'st have a great one filled. Neither art thou so good a friend to thy God, as thou should'st; for the less grace thou hast from him, the less glory thou wilt return unto him. The reflex beams are proportionable to the lightsome body they come from. Where grace is weak, the reflexion it makes of praise and glory to God, can be but weak and dark.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, God is so free and redundant in communicating his mercy, that he exceeds his Peoples modesty in asking. He gives them commonly their prayers with an over-plus, more than they have faith or face to ask; As *Naaman*, when *Gehazi* asked one *Talent*, would needs force two upon him. *Abraham* asked a child of God, when he wanted an Heir in whom he might live when dead. Now God promises him a *Son*, and more than so, a *numerous off-spring*; yea, more still, such an off-spring, that in his off-spring *all the Nations of the earth shall be blessed.* *Jacob*, he desired but Gods pass, under the protection of which he might go and return safely, with food and rayment enough to keep him alive, *Gen. 28. 20.* Well, this he shall have; but God thinks it not enough, and therefore sends him home with *two hands*, who went out a poor fugitive, with little besides his Pilgrims staff. *Solomon* prays for *wisdom*, and God throws in wealth and honour, *2 Chron. 1. 10.* The woman of *Canaan* begs a *crum* (as much as we would cast to a Dog) and Christ gives her a *childs portion*; she came to have her sick child made well, and with it she hath the life of her own soul given her. Yea, Christ puts the Key of his treasure into her own hand, and leaves her as it were to serve her self; *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt, Mat. 15. 28.*

CHAP. XII.

Satan's endeavour to interrupt the Christian at Prayer, by wandring roving thoughts, and his design both against God and the Saint therein.

2. A Second Design Satan hath against the Christian, is, to interrupt him in the duty (when he can by no means keep him from it) 'Tis hard to steal a prayer, and the Devil not know what thou art going about. He watches thy motions (Christian) and is at thy heels wherever thou turnest; If thou

art about any evil action, he is at thy elbow to jogg thee on, or before thee to remove every stone out of the way, that the bowl may go the more smoothly on, and thou mai'st not be sick of the enterprize by the rubs thou meetest in the way. *Abab* had but a Plot hatching in his thoughts of going up to

Ramoth-Gilead, and presently *Satan* hath his Knights of the Post whom he sends to bid him go up and prosper. *David* himself had but some proud thoughts stirring him up to number the people, *Satan* takes the advantage, and works with the humour now moving, whereby it soon ripen'd into that fore, which God launced with so sharp a judgement as the loss of seventy thousand men. Now he is as skilful and ready at hand to disturb a holy action, as to promote a wicked. When the *Sons of God* come to present themselves before the Lord, *Satan* forgets not to be among them; he is no *Recusant*; scruples not to be present when you worship God; indeed he is first there, and last thence. Sometimes thou shalt find him injecting motions of his own, sometimes wire-drawing thy own; when he sees a vain thought, a sin sprung by thy wanton fancy, he will help thee to pursue the Chase. To be sure, he will be at one end of every inordinate motion of thy heart; either the father to beget, or the Nurse to bring them up.

These are so many and diverse, that we may as well tell the Atoms we see in a Sun-beam, as number and sort this miscellaneous heap of roving thoughts which are incident to the Christian in prayer. Sometimes he will inject, such as are sinful, proud, filthy, yea blasphemous thoughts, not that he hopes to find entertainment in the Christians heart for such guests, much less to make a settlement of them there with the gracious souls consent; but to make a hurly burly, and confusion in his spirit, whereby (as upon some sudden scare in our Assemblies) the holy exercise he is now about, may be hindered. Sometimes he will prompt thoughts holy in themselves (but impertinent) which, at another time himself would oppose with all his might, but now presents them, because most likely to find welcome, and fit enough to serve his present purpose, being though good fruit, yet brought forth in a bad season. I believe none, that have any acquaintance with this duty, and their hearts in it, are altogether strangers to Satans slights of this nature.

Now he hath a double plot; *One* levell'd against God himself; *another* against the Christian thereby.

SECT. I.

First, against God. The Devil knows very well, that not the least part of his tribute of Honour, is by the Christian paid upon his knees in this Solemn act of Divine worship, to intercept which, is both his great ambition and endeavour. Nay, he despairs not (if his design takes) to make the Christian dishonour him most, where God looks his Name should be above all sanctified. Indeed those have the unhappy opportunity of casting the greatest indignities on God, who are admitted to stand nearest to him. Should he who hath the honour to set the Crown on his Princes head, bring it in a filthy case, and so clap it on; or instead of the Kings own Royal Crown, bring some ridiculous one of straw, or such like stuff contrived on purpose to make laughter, what greater scorn could such a one possibly invent to throw upon his Prince! The Attributes of God are his Royal

Diadem, and it is no small honour that the great God puts upon the Christian, by admitting him as it were to set this Crown on his head, which he doth, when in prayer he gives him the glory of his Majesty and Holiness, Power and Mercy, Truth and Faithfulness, &c. with such humble adoration, and holy ravishment of affection as may comport with the infinite perfections of his Deity. But if our present thoughts in prayer be not of God, or not suitable to God, and these his glorious excellencies, we pollute his Name, and not honour it; we mock him, not worship him; in a word, we pull off his Crown (as much as in us lies) rather than set it on. Now doth not thy heart tremble, Christian, in thy bosom, to think, thou shouldst be Satans instrument to offer such an indignity as this unto thy God and King! Thou art (if a Saint) the Temple of the Holy Ghost, prayer the spiritual sacrifice which from the Altar of a humble heart thou art to offer; wilt thou now suffer *Satan* to sit in this Temple of God, and exalt himself there, by any vain, much less vile thoughts, above God himself, whom thou art worshipping! Suppose while a Prince is at Dinner, a company of impudent Ruffians should rush into the Room through the negligence of the Princes servants that are waiting on him, and they should throw the dishes, one this way, another that way, would not these servant deserve a severe rebuke that lookt no better to the door? Ordinances of worship are Gods Table, the Sacrifices under the Law, called *Gods food and bread*. When the Saint is praying, the King of Heaven sits at his Table, *Cant. 1. 12* The Dishes served up, are the graces of his Spirit in the Saint. Now wandering thoughts they come in, and turn the table as it were upside down, they spill the Spicknard which thou shouldst pour forth: How ill may thy God take it, that thou lookest no better to the door of thy heart?

SECT. II. *Wandering Thoughts*

Secondly, His spight is at thee, Christian. *First*, If he can get thee to sport with these, or slyly yield to them without making any vigorous resistance, that prayer, he knows, will neither do him hurt, nor thy self good. Dost think God will welcome that prayer to Heaven, which hath not thy heart to bear it company thither? And how can thy heart go with it, when thou hast sent it another way? 'Twere a vain thing to expect that ship should make a prosperous Voyage, which is set adrift to Sea to be carried whither every wave it meets will drive it, without any Pilot to steer it to a certain Haven, or such a one that hath no skill or care to hold the Helm with a steady hand: Such are the prayers that come from a roving heart: Will God hear thee when thou mockest him? And if this be not to mock him, what is? Like Children that give a knock at a door and then run away to their play again. Thus thou reardest up thy voice to God, and then art gone in thy roving thoughts to hold chat with the world or worse, forgetting whom thou spakest last to. Is not this to play bo-peep with God? *Magnam injuriam Deo facio, cum precor, ut meas preces exaudiat, quas ego qui fundo, non exaudio. Deprecor illum, ut mihi intendat,*

sendat, ego vero, nec mihi nec illi, intendo. Thus the holy man complains of himself: How injurious and unworthy of God his carriage was in prayer, *I would have God* (saith he) *hear that prayer which myself doth not, when I put it up; I would have Gods ear attentive to me, when I neither mind God nor myself when I pray.* Secondly, He disturbs thee in praying, that he may make thee weary of praying. Indeed he is not likely to miss his mark, if thou lettest these vermine go on to breed in thy heart; for these will rob thee of the sweetness of the duty; and when the Marrow is once out, thou wilt easily be perswaded to throw the bone away. *Omnis vita gustu ducitur.* He is in danger to forsake his meat, who hath lost the relish of it. Prayer is a tedious weary work to him, that he hath no pleasure in performing of it; and weariness in it, stands next door to being weary of it. Thirdly, Thou provokest the Spirit of God (that alone can carry you through the work) to withdraw his assistance. Who will help him that minds not what he does? You know what *Joab* said to *David*, when he indulged his inordinate passion for the loss of *Abalom*, *If thou go not forth, there will not carry me with thee this night, and that will be worse with thee than all the evil that befell thee,* 2 Sam. 19. 7. Truly, either thou must speedily rouse thy self out of thy sloth and non-attendance, or else the Spirit will be

gone, and He departed, it will be worse with thee than ever. Whom hast thou then to help thee in thy work? And thou wilt find it harder to bring him back, than to keep him from going. The necessary infirmities which cleave to thy imperfect state (if protested against) shall not drive him away, but if thou lett'st them nestle in thy heart, he takes it as thy giving him warning to be gone. An affront done to an *Ambassador* by the baser sort of people as he walks in the street (while resident in a foreign State) may be past over; but when such shall find discouragement from the Prince, then it makes a breach. Take heed therefore of shewing favour to such Disturbers of the League betwixt God and thy soul. Thy heart which should be a house of prayer, Christ will not endure to have it a place of Merchandize. Either thou must whip these buyers and sellers out, or the spirit will go out. We read of an *abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place*, Mat. 24. which some interpret to be the *Roman Ensigns* there display'd when *Jerusalem* was taken. This *abomination* usher'd in desolation. What dost thou by thy roving thoughts, but set up an *abomination* in the Temple of thy heart? Oh! down with these, as thou wouldst not be left desolate, and wholly void of Gods gracious presence with thee.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains the first cause of roving thoughts in prayer, with its cure.

Quest. But it may be now you will ask, What counsel can you give to arm us against both these incursions of Satan, and bubblings of our own vain hearts in prayer? How can we keep either our hearts in, or these out?

Ans. Impossible indeed it is wholly to prevent them, they come so suddenly and secretly, even as lightning in at the Window. We may as well keep the Wind out of our house (which gets in at every crevice) though the doors be shut, as wholly free our hearts from their disturbance. Yet this will not disoblige us from our utmost care and endeavor to hinder the prevalency of them. Humours while rouling here and there, do not endanger us so much, as when they gather to a head, and settle in some joynt and part of the body. I have read of some *Eastern* parts of the world, where such multitudes of Locusts and Caterpillars are seen, that they almost darken the air as they flie, and devour every green thing where they light. The Inhabitants therefore when they perceive this Army hovering over them, by making fires in their fields, keep them from lighting, with the smoke that ascends therefrom. Thou canst not hinder these roving thoughts from flying now and then over thy head, but surely thou maist do something that may prevent their settling. Towards which good work take these directions, which I shall endeavour to suit to those several Causes from whence they proceed.

SECT. I.

First, The first cause, and indeed original of all other, is the natural vanity and levity of our minds, which are as inconsistent as quick-silver, that hath (they say) *Principium motus, sed non quietis.* They are as unstable as water, which fluid element (as we see in a little of it poured on the ground) diffuseth it self hither and thither, and so is soon drunk up and lost. Thus do our vain minds scatter them selves into impertinencies, but never so much, as when we are conversant about spiritual duties; then above all we discover the lightness of our spirits, and this is not the least part of that evil, which followed mans degeneracy, who by his fall wounded both head and heart. Now though there be a cure in part, made by the grace of God as to both these in a Saint, yet there still remains a craze in his soul, whereby he is not able to dwell long upon spiritual things without some dissipation of thoughts, as innocent *Adam* could, who before his fall, might have walked through the whole world, and not have had one thought of his heart mis-placed, or turned from its right point by the diversity of objects he met, they being all to the eye of his soul, a *clear medium*, through which it passed to terminate it self in God, as the air is now to our bodily eye through which it pierceth, & stays not till it comes at the body of the Sun. But alas it is with us as with one that hath had his skull broke by some dangerous fall,

fall, who (when recovered) finds his brain so weakened, that when he goes about any serious business, he cannot intend much, or persist long, but is off and on, out and in; such vagaries and cross steps do our hearts take in duty, and this gives Satan advantage enough to work upon. If the ship be light for want of ballast, and a strong gust of wind arises too: Oh! how hard then is it to make it sail trim, or keep from toppling over! A vain heart, and a strong temptation together, makes sad work, when God stands by, and gives Satan leave to practise upon it. Be therefore careful to take in thy ballast before thou putt'st to sea. Labour to poise thy heart before thou goest to pray: which that thou maist do,

SECT. II.

First, Inure thy self to holy thoughts in thy ordinary course. The best way to keep Vessels from leaking (when we would use them for some special occasion) is to let them stand full. A vain heart out of prayer, will be little better in prayer. The more familiar thou makest holy thoughts and savoury discourse to thee in thy constant walking, the more season'd thou wilt find thy heart for this duty. A Scholar by often rubbing up his notions when alone, and talking of them with his Colleagues, makes them his own; so that when he is put upon any exercise, they are at hand, and come fresh into his head: Whereas another, for want of this filling, wants matter for his thoughts to feed on, which makes him straggle into many impertinencies before he can hit of that which suits his occasion. The carnal liberty, which we give our hearts in our ordinary walking, makes our thoughts more unruly and unsuitable for duties of worship: For such thoughts and words leave a tincture upon the spirit, and so hinder the souls taking a better colour, when it returns into the presence of God. Walk in the company of sinful thoughts all the day, and thou wilt hardly shut the door upon them, when thou goest into thy Closet. Thou hast taught them to be bold; they will now plead acquaintance with thee, and croud in after thee, like little children, who if you play with them, and carry them much in your arms, they will cry after you when you would be rid of their company.

SECT. III.

Secondly, Possess thy heart with a reverential awe of Gods Majesty and Holiness. This (if any thing) will gird up the loins of thy mind strait, and make thee *hoc agere*, mind what thou art about. Darest thou toy and trifle with the Divine Majesty in a duty of his Worship? Carry thyself childishly before the living God, to look with one eye upon him, as it were, and with the other upon a lust? to speak one word to God, and chat two with the World? Does not thy heart tremble at this! *Sic ora* (saith Bernard) *quasi assumptus & praesentatus ante faciem ejus in excelso throno, ubi millia millium ministrant ei.* So

pray as if thou wert taken up and presented before God sitting on his Royal Throne on high, with Millions of Millions of his glorious Servitors ministering to him in heaven. Certainly, the face of such a Court would awe thee. If thou wert but at the Bar before a Judge, and hadst a glass of a quarter of an hours length turn'd up (being all the time thou hadst allowed thee to improve for the begging of thy life now forfeited and condemn'd) wouldst thou spare any of this little time to gaze about the Court, to see what Cloaths this man hath on, and what Lace another wears? God shame us for our folly in mis-spending our praying seasons. Is it not thy life thou art begging at Gods hands? and that a better, I trow! than the Malefactor sues for of his mortal Judge; and dost thou know whether thou shalt have so long as a quarter of an hour allowed thee when thou art kneeling down? and yet wilt thou scribble and dash it out to no purpose upon impertinencies! If thou believest not God to be so great and glorious, why dost thou pray? If thou dost, why no better? Why no closer, and compact in thy thoughts? Will God judge us for every idle word that is spoken in our shop and house? at our work, yea sport and recreation? And shall thy idle words in prayer not be accounted for? And are not those idle words that come from a lazy heart, a sleepy heart that minds not what it says? What procured *Nadab* and *Abihu* so sudden and strange a death? Was it not their strange incense? And is not this strange praying, when thy mind is a stranger to what thy lips utter? Behave thy self thus to thy Prince, if thou darest. Let thy hand reach a Petition to him, and thine eye look, or thy tongue talk to another, would He not command this Clown, or rather Mad-man, to be taken from before him? *How I need of mad-men, that you have brought this fellow into my presence?* 1 Sam. 21. 15. said *Achish*, when *David* behaved himself discomposedly. Oh! could you but look through the Key-hole, and see how glorious Angels in Heaven serve their Maker, who are said to behold the face of God continually, surely thou wouldst tremble to think of thy slighty performing this duty.

Thirdly, Go not in thy own strength to this duty, but commit thy self, by faith, to the conduct of the Spirit of God. God hath promised to prepare, or establish (as the word is) the heart. Indeed then the heart is prepared, when established and fixt. A shaking hand may as soon write a right line, as our loose hearts keep themselves steady in duty. Shouldst thou, with *Jeb*, make a Covenant with thine eye, and resolve to bung up thine ear from all by-discourse: How long thinkst thou, shouldst thou be true to thine own self, who hast so little command of thine own thoughts? Thy best way were to put thy self out of thine own hands, and lay thy weight on him that is able to bear thee better than thy own legs. Pray with *David*, *Uphold me, Lord, with thy free Spirit*, Psal. 51. 12. The Vine leaning on a Wall, preserves it self and its fruit, whose own weight else, without this help would soon lay it in the dirt.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains the second cause of wandering thoughts in prayer, with its proper cure.

2. **A** Second cause of these wandering roving thoughts in prayer, is a dead and an unactive heart in him that prayeth. If the affections be once down, then the Christian is as a City whose Wall is broken down: No keeping then the thoughts in, or Satan out. The soul is an active creature; either it must be employed by us, or it will employ us though to little purpose. Like our poor, find them work, and they keep at home; but let them want it, and you have them roving and begging all the Countrey over. The affections are as the Master-Workmen, which set our thoughts on work. Love entertains the soul with pleasant and delightful thoughts on its beloved object. Grief commands in the soul to muse with sorrowful thoughts on its aile and trouble. So that, Christian, as long as thy heart bleeds in the sense of sin, they will have no leisure, when thou art confessing sin, to rove and wander; if thy desires be lively, and flame forth in thy Petitions with a holy zeal for the graces and mercies prayed for, this will be as a Wall of fire to keep thy thoughts at home. The lazy prayer, is the roving prayer. When *Israel* talked of travelling three dayes journey in the Wilderness, *Pharaoh* said, *Ye are idle, ye are idle*; Therefore they said, *Let us go*. As if he had said, Surely they have little to do, or else they would not think of gadding; and therefore to cure them of this, he commanded more work to be given, *Exod. 3*. We may truly say thus of our wandering hearts, they are idle; we pray, but our affections are dead and dull. The heart hath little to do in the duty for the setting of his thoughts on work, only to speak or read a few words, which is so easie a task, that a man may do it, and spare whole troops of his thoughts to be employed elsewhere at the same time. But now when the affections are up, melting into sorrow in the confession of sin, stirring forth with holy panting and breathing in its supplications, truly this fixeth the thoughts. The soul intended can no more be in two places together, than the body. And as these holy affections will prevent the souls wandering disposition: so also make it more difficult for Satan to throw in his injections. Flies will not so readily light on a Pot seething-hot

on the fire, as when it stands cold in the window. *Baalzebub* is one of the Devils names; that is, the god of a flie: In allusion to the Idolatrous Sacrifices where flies were so busie. This flie will not so readily light on thy Sacrifice when flaming from the Altar of thy heart with zeal. Now to preserve thy affections in prayer warm and lively, let it be thy care to chase and stir up the natural heat that is undoubtedly in thee, if a Christian, by the serious consideration of thy sins, wants, and mercies. While thou art pondering on these, thine eye will affect thine heart: They will, as *Abishag* did to *David*, by laying them in thy bosom, bring thy soul to a kindly heat in those affections, which thou art to act in the several parts of prayer. Thy sins reviewed, and heightened with their aggravations, will make the springs of godly sorrow to rise in thy heart. Canst thou chide but mourn, when thou shalt read thy several indictments to thy guilty soul now called to hold up its hand at the bar of thy Conscience? Canst thou hear how the holy Law of God hath been violated, his Spirit grieved, and his Son murdered by thy bloody hands, and this when he hath been treating thee mercifully, and not mourn! Surely, should a man walk over a field after a bloody battel hath been fought, and there see the bodies, though of his enemies, lying weltring in their blood, his heart could not but then relent, though in the heat of battel his fury shut out all thoughts of pity; but what if he should spy a father or a dear friend dead upon the place of the wounds which his unnatural hand had given, would not his bowels turn? Yes surely, if he carried the heart of a man in his bosom. Thou mai'st guess, Christian, by this, what help such a meditation would afford toward the breaking of thy heart for thy sins: Certainly, it would make thee throw away that unhappy dagger which was the instrument to give those deep stabs to the heart of Christ, and this is the best mourning of all. Again, thy wants well weighed, would give wings to thy desires. If once thou wert possessed with the true state of thy affairs, how necessary it is for thee to have supplies from heaven, or to starve, and die, and so in the rest, &c.

CHAP. XV.

Contains a third cause of wandering thoughts in prayer, with its cure.

3. **A** Third cause of roving thoughts, is, incumbence of worldly cares. 'Tis no wonder, that man can enjoy no privacy with God in a duty, who hath so many from the world rapping at his door to speak with him, when he is speaking to God. *Periclitatur pietas in negotiis*; Religion never goes in more danger, than when in a croud of worldly

business. If such a one prayes, 'tis not long before something comes in his head to take him off. *Isaac went out to meditate, and behold the Camels*. The World is soon in such a ones sight; he puts forth one hand to heaven in a spiritual thought, but soon pulls it back, and a Worldly one steps before it, and so makes a breach upon his duty. *Dreams* (*Solomon* tells

tells us) *come from a multitude of business.* And so do dreaming prayers: They are made up of Heterogeneous independent thoughts. The Shop, Barn, Ware-house, are unfit places for prayer; I mean the Shop in the heart, and the Barn in the heart. I have read of one who was laid to be a Walking Library, because he left not his learning with his Books in his study, but carried them about him wherever he went in his memory, and judgement, that had digested all he read, and so made them his own. And have we not too many Walking Shops and Barns, who carry them to bed and board, Church and Closet? And how can such pray with an united heart, who have so many sharers in their thoughts! *O anima sancta sola esto, anne nescis verecundum habes sponsum?* Oh! holy soul, get thee alone if thou would'st have Christ give thee his loves; knowest thou not thou hast a modest Husband? Indeed he gives not the soul his embraces in a Crowd, nor the kisses of his lips in the Market. *Jacob* sends away his company to the other side of the River, and then God gave him one of the sweetest meetings he had in all his life, let him now pray even a whole night if he will, and welcome. Now, Christian, for thy help against these,

SECT. I.

First, Labour to keep thy distance to the World, and that Sovereignty which God hath given thee over it in its profits, and pleasures, or whatever else may prove a snare to thee. While the Father and Master know their place, and keep their distance, so long Children and Servants will keep theirs by being dutiful and officious; but when they forget this, the Father grows fond of the one, and the Master too familiar with the other, then they begin to lose their Authority, and the other to grow saucy, and under no command; Bid them go, and it may be they'll not stir; set them a Task, and they will bid you do it your self. Truly thus it fares with the Christian, all the Creatures are his Servants, and so long as he keeps his heart at a holy distance from them, and maintains his Lordship over them, not laying them in his bosome, which God hath put under his feet, *Psal.* 8. all is well; he marches to the duties of Gods worship in a goodly order. He can be private with God, and these not be bold to croud in to disturb him; but when we grow fond of, and too familiar with them, alas how are we pester'd with them! We read of no undutifulness of *Hagar* towards her Mistress while a servant; but when *Sarah* gives her into *Abraham's* bosome, and admits her to share with her self in conjugal priviledges, truly then she begins to juggle with her Mistress, and carries her self saucily to her: Yea, and *Abraham* himself who would not have stuck to have put her away before, yet now he hath taken her into his bed, can hardly persuade his heart to yield to it, till God joyns with *Sarah* in the business, bidding him *hearken unto his Wife.* Thus, Christian, use the World as a Servant, which it was made for, and you may go to prayer, as *Abraham* up the Mount, leaving his Servants below; thou shalt find they will not have that power to disturb thee; but let either the profits or pleasures share with Christ in thy conjugal affection; and thou

wilt find thy heart loth to send this *Hagar* away though at the request of Christ himself, when he is calling thee into communion with himself; either use the World as if thou usedst it not, or you will pray as if you prayed not. The smok and sparks that rise from a Furnace, are carried that way the wind lies; if thy heart be to the World, thou canst not then keep thy thoughts from driving thither: Then, and not till then, will thy prayer ascend like a Pillar of incense, when there is a holy calmness on thy spirit, and this boisterous wind of inordinate affections to the World be laid. I must not take thee off from diligence in thy worldly Calling, this never spoils a good prayer, only watch thy heart that thou prostitute it not to the wanton embraces of it. That is the pure metall'd Sword or Knife, which bends this way, and that way, but returns to its straightness again, and stands not bent. That heart is of the right make, and hath heavens stamp upon it, which can stoop, and bend to the lowest Action of his worldly Calling, but then returns to his fitness for communion with God, and his heart stands not bent to the creature, but in a direct line to God and his worship.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Strengthen thy faith on the providence of God for the things of this life. A distrustful heart is ever thoughtful; whatever he is doing, his thoughts will be on that he fears he shall lose. When the Merchants adventure is insured (that whatever comes he cannot lose much) his heart then is at rest, he can eat his bread with quiet, and sleep without dreaming of shipwracks and Pirats; while another whose estate is at Sea, and fears what will become on it, Oh! how is this poor man haunted wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, with disquieting thoughts? if he hears the wind but a little loud, he cannot sleep for fear of his ship at Sea. Truly thus a soul by faith rowl'd on the promise, will find a happy deliverance from that disturbance, which another is pestered with in prayer; wherefore God in particular directs us to lay this burden from our shoulders on his, when we go to pray, that no by-thoughts arising from these our cares, may disturb us. *Be careful for nothing, but let your requests be made known to God, Phil.* 4. As if he had said, Leave me to take care for your work, and mind you to do mine; if things go amiss in your estates, names, families, I will take the blame, and give you leave to say God was not careful enough of you. When the *Males* of *Israel* went to worship God at *Jerusalem*, that they might not carry distracted minds with them (from the fear of their families left naked behind without a man to fight for them if an enemy should come) God takes the special care of their families in their absence, *Exod.* 34. 24. If we have but a faithful servant (who, we believe, will look to our business as carefully as our own selves) this makes us go forth with a free and quiet spirit, and not trouble our selves with what is done at home, when we are abroad. Oh! then let us be ashamed if our faith on Gods providence be not much more able to ease us of the burthen of distracting cares.

C H A P. XVI.

The fourth and last cause instanced in, of wandring thoughts in Prayer, with its remedy.

* These wandring thoughts are occasioned by the Christians non-observance of his heart in the act of prayer. Let him be at never so much cost of preparatory pains before duty, yet if he doth not watch himself narrowly in the duty it self, his heart will give him the slip, and run into a thousand vanities and impertinencies. The mind of man is a nimble creature; in one moment you shall have it in Heaven, and in the very next you shall find it on the earth: Like *Philip*, who being joyned to the *Em-much's Chariot*, on a sudden was carried out of his sight, and found at *Azotas*, a place far distant thence. Thus our hearts are soon gone away from the duty in hand, and taken a vagary to the furthest part of the World in their wild imagination; yea, which is worse, sometimes the mind is off and gadding, but the Christian goes on with his lip-labour, and takes no notice that his thoughts are gone astray: As *Joseph* and *Mary* were gone a dayes journey before they mist their child (who staid behind with other company.) Thus the Christian loseth his heart in duty, and goes on with a careless formality, that sometimes the prayer is almost done before he observes his hearts seat to be empty, or considers that his soul and spirit hath not born him company all the way; who, had he but at the first stepping aside of his thoughts, been aware, might have recovered and rescued them out of the hands of those vanities which stole them; as *David* did his Wives and Children from the *Amalekites* without any great trouble or loss. And therefore, Christian, keep thy heart with all diligence, observe whether it doth its part in the duty, or be as a string that sounds not in the consort. As you do with your children, so you had need do with your childish mind: haply they wait on you to *Church*, but when you are set (if not awed by your eye) they are gone, and may be playing all Sermon-time in the fields, and you miss them not; to prevent which, you set them before you, that you may see their carriage, and their behaviour. If thou didst thus pray observing and watching thy thoughts where, and what about, thou wouldst find more composure in thy spirit, than thou dost; nay, do not only observe thy thoughts in duty, but call them to a review after duty. Many go from prayer too much like boys from school, that think no more of their lesson, till they return again. Leave praying, and all thoughts how they have behaved themselves in prayer together, for shame do not thus. If thou neglectest to take account of thy self, consider that thou must give an account both of it, and this thy neglect after it before thy betters; God himself will have the full hearing thereof. He sets not any about a work, of which he means not to take cognizance how it was done: And were it not better that the *Audit* should be in thy more private Court, than thou be called to give up thy account at his dreadful

Tribunal? Resolve therefore to commune with thy heart upon this point; and the sooner thou goest about it, the better 'tis like to be done; because then the circumstances of the action will be freshest in thy memory. Go not then out of thy Closet, till thou hast examined thy heart; if thy thoughts in prayer shall be found to have been in any measure free and intire, thy affections warm and lively, matter of joy will arise to thee, and thanksgiving to God that thou hast escaped the hands of so many rovers and freebooters that lay in wait to make prize of thee. But take heed thou applaudest not thy self for thine own care and circumspection; alas thou wert not thine own keeper: He that lent his ear to thy prayer, gave thee thy heart to pray, and also kept it up in duty: Say rather with *David*, *Who am I, that I should be able to offer so willingly?* If thy heart upon the review be found to have played the truant, take shame, that thou beest not put to shame before the Lord. Oh! blush to think thou shouldst be so unfaithful to God and thine own soul, yea so foolish to run up and down on every idle Errand which Satan sends thee, and in the mean while neglect thy own work of so great an importance. The *Spouses* complaint may fit thy mouth, *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own I have not kept.* He is an unwise Messenger, who being sent to Market to provide food, is drawn by every idle companion to spend both his time and money in vain, and at night comes home without bread for the hungry family. Oh! Christian, was not thy errand to the Throne of grace to get new supplies from Heaven for thy poor soul? and doth it not grieve thee to think that now thy soul must pinch, for thy playing away thy praying time and talent, which, as Market-money, was put into thy hand to procure a new store? yea, that thou hast been injurious to thy God by taking his Name in vain? Thou appearedst in a praying posture, thy hand and voice were lift up to Heaven, as if thou meantst to pray, but (like him who said he would go into the vineyard, and did not) thou hast turned a contrary way, and set thy thoughts to work in another field; Will not this affect thy heart? Yes surely, and afflict it also, and this affliction of thy spirit will be a sovereign means to excite thy care for the future. The faults which are un-observed, are also un-corrected in the Scholars exercise, and so not like to be mended in the next. Wandring thoughts in prayer, are like vagrants, no such way to rid the Country of one, and the heart of the other, as by giving both the Law, the law I mean.

Quest. Oh! but saith the Christian, I have used this means, and yet to the grief of my heart, I am still pestered with them?

Ans. Take a few consolatory words to ease thy aking heart that groans under the burden of these thy wandring thoughts.

C H A P. XVII.

Some Consolatory Considerations for the Christian dejected over-much for wandering thoughts in prayer.

First, The affliction of thy spirit for them speaks more comfort to thee, than the presence of them discomfort; that thou art annoyed with such troublesome guests, is no more than the best of Saints have found and acknowledged. Wherefore did *David* pray, That *God would unite his heart to fear his Name*, but that he found it gadding? What means *Paul* by his complaint, *When I would do good, evil is present with me*, but that he had not yet got the full Mastery of his unruly thoughts? Thou seest it is no new disease thou art troubled with, but such as is common not only to the sons of men, but the children of God, a spot that may be seen on a Saints Coat; but they being afflicted for them, speaks one of these two things; and both of them have comfort in their mouth for thee. It proves either that they are Satans injections, and not the birth of thine own heart; or if they steam from thy own heart, yet the Spirit of God is the In-dweller, and these but intruders.

First, The moan thou makest for being yoked to such company, is a sign they are rather sent in by Satan, than called in by thee; his injections, rather than the suggestions of thine own heart. Our own thoughts commonly are more taking with, and pleasurable to us: The Mother does no more love the fruit of her own body, than we do the product of our minds. Hence *our own ways*, words, and thoughts, are called *our pleasure*, *Isa.* 58. 13. and therefore possibly they may be shot from his bow, thy heart being so affrighted at them, and wounded for them. Or,

Secondly, If they prove the off-spring of thine own mind, yet thy afflicted soul shews that the Spirit and Grace of God is the In-dweller, and these but intruders and involuntary motions, such as in thy deliberate thoughts thou abhorrest. Were they, as I may so say, of thy own house and family, thou wouldst not shew this zeal to shut the door upon them, or shriek out, when they come in upon thee; the Wife does not cry out when Husband, Children or Servants, come into the Room, but when Thieves and Cut-throats, from whom she looks for nothing but cruelty; it seems they are neither of thine acquaintance, nor likest thou their company by thy behaviour before them. Be not therefore over-troubled; for Satan if he can but disquiet thy mind with false fears, he hath one part of his errand done for which he sends them; these wicked thoughts are upon no other terms with thee, than holy thoughts are in the wicked; as those profit not them, because not entertain'd; so for the same reason shall not these hurt thee.

Secondly, Know these be the necessary infirmities of thy imperfect state, and so long as thou art faithful to resist and mourn for them, they rather move Gods pity to thee, than wrath against thee, 'Tis one

thing for a child employed by his Father, willingly or negligently to spoil the work he sets him about; and another, when through natural weakness he fails in the exact doing of it. Should a Master bid his Servant give him a Cup of Wine, and he should willingly throw both Glais and Wine on the ground, he might expect his Masters just displeasure; but if through some unsteadiness (it may be Palsie in his hand) he should, notwithstanding all his care, spill some of it in the bringing, an ingenuous Master will rather pity him for his disease, than be angry for the Wine that is lost; and did God ever give his Servants occasion to think him a hard Master? Hath he not promised, *that he will spare us as a Father his Child that serves him*? From whence come all the Apologies, which he makes for his peoples failings, if not from his merciful heart, interpreting candidly them to proceed rather from their want of skill, than will, power, or desire? *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* *Zech.* 4. 'Tis *Christs* answer in the behalf of *Josuah* whom Satan accused for his filthy garments. *The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing*, *Matth.* 26. 41. was His favourable gloss for His Disciples drowsiness in Prayer.

Thirdly, Believers prayers pass a refining before they come into Gods hands. Did he indeed read them with their impertinencies, and take our blotted copy out of our hand, we could not fear too much what the issue might be, but they come under the Correctors hand, our *Lord Jesus* hath the inspection of them, who sets right all our broken requests, and misplaced Petitions, he washes out our blots with his blood, his Mediation is the fine sarse through which our prayers are bolted, all that is coarse and Heterogeneous, He severs from the pure; what is of his own spirits breathing, He presents, and what our fleshly part added, He hides, that it shall not prejudice us or our prayers. This was the sweet Gospel-truth wrapt up in the *Priests bearing the sins of their holy offerings*, *Exod.* 28. 36.

Fourthly, Though the presence of these be a great affliction to thee, yet God will make them of singular use to thee. **F**irst, To humble thee, and take all glorying from thee, that thou shalt not pride thyself in thy other assistances, which thou wouldst be prone to do, if thy prayer had not this lame foot to humble thee. **S**econdly, To keep thee wakeful and circumspect in thy Christian course. By thy disturbance from these, thou seest the War is not yet quite done. *The Canaanite is yet in the Land*; though not Master of the Field, yet skulking in his holes and fastnesses out of which he comes like an Adder in the path, that by these sudden surprizes, and nibbling at thy heel, he may make thee like the Rider, fall backward, and so steal a victory unawares of thee, whom he despairs to overcome in a pitch Battel by sins more deliberate: And truly, if he dare be so bold as to set upon thee,

thee, when in Communion with God (so nigh thy Rock and Castle) doth it not behove thee, Christian, to look about thee, that he gets no greater advantage of thee, when thou art at further distance from him in thy worldly employments? *Thirdly*, God will make thee by these, more merciful to, and less censorious of thy brethren in greater failings.

Fifthly, in thy faithful conflict with them thou mayst promise thy self, at last, victory over them, but expect this gradually to be done, not at once, nor hastily to be delivered into thy hands. As God said of *Israel's* enemies. Therefore maintain the fight, faint not at their stubborn resistance; Pray and mourn that thou canst pray no better; mourn and fight again; fight and believe them down, though

sometimes they get thee under their feet. God made a promise to *Noah* after the flood, in which he gave him a Sovereignty over the creatures. *The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the Earth; Gen. 9. 2.* But we see many beasts are fierce, savage and cruel to mankind; yet thus it is fulfilled, That none are so fierce, and unruly, but by mans Art and industry they have been and still are taken and tamed, as the *Apostle* hath it, *1 Tim. 3. 7.* Thus God hath given his Saints, by promise, a Sovereignty over sin and Satan, *He will subdue both under your feet.* The dread of the Saints shall fall on the proudest Devil, and his foot shall be set on the neck of his fiercest lust, yet this will cost hot work before the one or other be effected.

CHAP. XVII.

Satans third and last Design upon the Saints Prayer; with the first impediment that may obstruct the acceptation of his prayer in Heaven.

T *Hirdly*, The third and last design that Satan hath against the Saint in this great undertaking of Prayer, is to hinder his success therein. He will have thee, Christian, (if he can) one way or other, outwards or homewards; and it comes all to one, whether the ship be taken as it goes forth, or as it returns home; nay, of the two, it is the greater loss to be Defeated of our expectations, when we look for our Prayers to come richly fraught with mercies from Heaven.

Now two ways he labours to hinder the success of prayer.

First, He endeavours to hinder the welcome of their prayers with God, that they may be cast as a Petition out of Court, which God will not look on.

Secondly, if he cannot prevail in this, then he plays an after-game, and will so handle the matter (if possible) that though they have welcome with God, and find gracious reception in Heaven, yet, that this be not believed by the Saint on Earth, but that he gives them for lost, and looks no more after them. Now though this be not a total and final miscarriage of the prayer, yet the Devil hath hereby a great advantage, depriving him of the present comfort and benefit which his faith might pay him in before a return is made of his prayer.

SECT. I.

First, Satan labours to hinder the entertainment of our prayers in Heaven. Now our prayers may several ways be stopt at Heavens door, and denied that gracious access, which God useth to give. I speak now of Saints prayers; as for the prayers of the wicked, there is one Law for them all, to be cast over the bar, and the door shut upon them. The Tree must be good, before the fruit it bears can taste sweet on Gods palate. Now the stoppage which the Saints prayer meets withal, springs not from any unwillingness in God to give out his mercy, or any dislike to have Beggars at his Door. *A Deo placet Deo dare, ut propter hoc omnia creavit, volebat exim habere*

qua & quibus dare. God is so delighted with acts of mercy, that therefore he made the World, and all in it, that he might have Suitors to beg, and Alms to give to those Suitors; but from our selves, we put the stones into the Lock, which hinders the turning of Prayers key in it, and so indeed we shut the door of mercy upon ourselves. The Devil himself could not immediately hinder a Saints welcome, he hath not such command of Gods ear, did we not put words into his mouth, and help him to a charge against us. The lyes which he, as a false Accuser, carries to God, shall not prejudice us in Gods thoughts, or make our prayers the less acceptable; but if the Accusation be true, God will hear it, though he be a wicked spirit that tells the Tale, and we his Dear Children of whom it is told. A Father, when he hears of some wicked prank his Child hath plaid, will chide and frown on him, though it be an enemy that told him of it. Now to instance what miscarriages in a Saint hinder their audience at the Throne of Grace:

SECT. II.

First, When the thing prayed for is not according to the Will of God. We have not a liberty to pray at random for what we will. The Throne of Grace is not set up that we may come and there vent our sudden distempered passions before God; or to make any sawcy motion to him that comes in our head; truly then God should have work enough. If he had promised to sign all our Petitions without any regard to the subject-matter of them, he should too oft set his Hand against himself, and pass that away, which would be little for his glory to give. *Herod* was too lavish, when he gave his *Mignon* leave to ask what she would, even to half of his Kingdom; and he paid dearly for it; for he gave her that head which was more worth than his whole Kingdom (for the cutting off his head, lost him his Crown.) No, we have to do with a wise God, who, to stop the mouth of all such bold beggars, that would ask what unbecoms us

✓ to desire, or him to give, hath given a Law of Prayer, and stinted us to the matter thereof, *When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.* That is, learn here what you may pray for in faith to receive. *1 Joh. 5. 14. This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.* Faith without a promise, is like a foot without any firm ground to stand upon. 'Twas well Luther interpreted himself, when he said, *Fiat voluntas mea*, My will be done; *Memento Domine, quia tua*, My will, Lord, because thine. Now the promise contains this Will of God. Be sure thou gatherest all thy flowers of prayer out of this Garden, and thou canst not do amiss. But take heed of mingling with them, any wild gourd of thine own. Remember the check our Lord gave his Disciples when venting their Vindictive Passion in their Prayer. *Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven to consume them? And he said, You know not what manner of spirit ye are of, Luk. 9. 44, 55.* They had here an example to countenance their Act, but that *Heroicus impetus*, and extraordinary spirit, by which *Elijah* and other of the Prophets were acted, is not our standing Rule for Prayer; that came in them from the Spirit of God, which in us may proceed from the spirit of the Devil, which is implied in our Saviours question, *You know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* As if he had said,

You little think who stirred you up: You had your Coal not from God's Altar, but from Satan's Furnace. Oh! let us beware that we be not the Devil's Messengers, in going to God upon his errand: Which we do, when we pray against the Rule, or without a Warrant. Belch not out thy unruly passions of anger there, presently to have thine enemies confounded (the Disciples Case) nor vent thy intemperate sorrow through impatience: As *Job* in the Paroxysm of his trouble begs of God to take away his life in all haste. Take counsel of the Word, and let not thy lip be hasty to utter a matter before the Lord. *Daniel's* Method was the right, *Chapter 9. 2.* First he goes to the Scripture, and searches what the mind of God was concerning the time when he had promised his people a return out of their captivity, which having found, and learnt thereby how to lay his plea, then away he goes to besiege the Throne of Grace. *Vers. 3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer, &c.* Art thou sick or poor? In want of any temporal mercy? Go, and enquire upon what terms these are promised, that thy faith may not jet beyond the foundation of the promise by a peremptory and absolute desire of them, for then thy building will fall, and thou be put to shame, because thou askest more than God ever promised.

CHAP. XIX.

The second thing that may hinder the welcome and acceptation of a Saint's Prayer.

Secondly, Though the subject-matter of a Saint's prayer be bottom'd on the Word, yet if the end he aims at, be not level'd right, this is a second door at which his prayer will be stopt, though it pass the former. *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* Take, I confess, a Christian in his right temper, and he levels at the glory of God, yet as a Needle that is toucht with a Load-stone, may (being shaken) be removed from its beloved point to which Nature hath espoused it, though trembling till it again recovers it: So a gracious soul may in a particular Act and Request vary from this end (being jogg'd by Satan) yea disturbed by an enemy nearer home, his own unmortified corruption. Truly he is a rare Archer that ever hits this white. Do you not think it possible for a Saint, in distress of body and spirit, to pray for health in the one, and comfort in the other, with too selfish a respect had to his own ease and quiet? Yes sure, and to pray for gifts, and assistance in some eminent service with an eye asquint to his own credit and applause, to pray for a child with too inordinate a desire, that the honour of his house may be built up in him. I know none so seasoned grace, as not to be subject to such warpings of spirit: And this may be understood as the sense (in part) of that expression, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* For though to desire our own health, peace and reputation, be not an iniquity (when contain'd within the banks that God hath set,) yet

when they over-flow, and dare to such a height lift up as to over-top the glory of God, yea to stand but in a level with it, they are a great abomination. That which in the first or second degree is wholesome food, would be rank poison in the fourth or fifth; Therefore (Christian) Catechize thy self before thou prayest, O my soul, what sends thee on this errand! Know but thy own mind, what thou prayest for, and thou mayst soon know Gods mind how thou shalt speed. Secure God his glory, and thou mayst carry away the mercy with thee. Had *Adonijah* askt *Abigail* out of love to her person, and not rather out of love to the Crown, 'tis like *Solomon* would not have denied the banes between them, but this wife *Princess* observed his drift to make her but a step to his getting into the Throne which he ambitiously thirsted for, and therefore his request was denied with so much disdain. Look that when thy Petition is Loyal, there be not treason in thy end and aim; if there be, He will find it out.

Quest. When shall I know that I aim at God or self in prayer.

Ans. This will commonly appear by the posture of our heart, when God delays, or denies the thing we pray for. A soul that can acquiesce, and patiently bear a delay or denial (I speak now of such mercies as are of an inferiour nature, not necessary to salvation, and so not absolutely promised) gives a hopeful testimony, that the glory of God weighs more in his thoughts, than his own private interest, or accommodation.

darion. A selfish heart is both peremptory and hasty; it must have the thing it cries for, and that quickly too, or else it faints or chides, falls down in a swoon, or breaks out into murmuring complaints, not sparing to fall foul on the promises and Attributes of God himself. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and abstinest not?* Isa. 58. 3. Now from whence come both these, but from an over-valuing of our selves? which makes us clash with Gods glory, that may be more advanced by these delays and denials, than if we had the thing we so earnestly desire. God was more glorified in denying Christ himself his life,

than if he had let that bitter Cup pass without his tasting of it, which Christ (*Joh. 12. 28.*) understanding fully, resign'd himself thereunto, saying, *Father, glorifie thy self; not my will, but thy will be done.* As if he had said, I would not save my life, to lose thee the least of thy glory: This is the Copy we should all write after. Indeed if our distempered hearts be so wilful and hasty, as not to be content with what, and that when it pleaseth God also, he should not love us in gratifying such desires, for thereby he would but nourish our distemper, which is better cured by starving, than feeding it.

CHAP. XX.

Contains the third and fourth Block that may lie in the way of a Saints Prayer.

THirdly, The Christian's prayer may miscarry, when with his prayer he joyns not a diligent use of the means: We must not think to lie upon God, as some lazy people do on their rich kindred; to be always begging of him, but not put forth our hand to work in the use of means. God hath appointed prayer as a help to our diligence, not as a Cloak for our sloth. Idle Beggars are welcom neither to Gods door nor mans. What! wilt thou lift up thy hands to God in prayer, and then put them in thy Pocket! Doth not God forbid our charity to him that worketh not? *We commanded you, if any would not work, neither should he eat,* 2 Thess. 3. 10. And will he encourage that idleness in thee, which he would have punished by us? 'Tis a good gloſs of Bernard upon that of Jeremiab, Lament. 3. 41. *Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the Heavens. Qui orat & laborat, ille cor levat ad Deum cum manibus;* He that prayeth, and is diligent in the use of means, is the person that lifts up his heart with his hands to God. Look therefore, Christian, thou minglest thy sweat with thy tears, thy labour with thy prayers. If thy prayer doth not set thee on work, neither will it set thy God at work for thee. Is it a lust thou art praying against? And dost thou sit down idle to see whether it will now die alone? Will that prayer slay one lust, that lets another (thy sloth I mean) live under its nose? As God will not save thy soul, so neither will he destroy thy sin, unless thy hand also be put to the work. See how God raised Joshua from off the earth, where he lay praying and mourning for Israels defeat, *Josh. 7. 10. Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, &c. vers. 12. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, &c. vers. 13. Up sanctifie the people.* Oh how oft may God rouse us up from our knees, and say, Why lie ye here with your lazy prayers! you have sinned in not taking my counsel, and obeying my Orders, I bade you watch, as well as pray; why do you not one as well as the other? My command obliges you to flie from the snare that Satan lays for you, as well as pray against it: therefore it is, you cannot stand before your lusts. Moses durst not go to God with a prayer in behalf of sinning

Israel, till he had shewn his zeal for God against their sin, and then he goes and speeds: See *Exodus 32. 25.* compared with *vers. 31.* Dost think to walk loosely all day, yielding thy self, and betraying the glory of God into the hands of thy lust, and then mend all with a prayer at night? Alas thy cowardize and sloth will get to Heaven before thy prayer, and put thee to shame, when thou comest on such an errand.

Fourthly, The Saints prayer may miscarry from some secret grudge that is lodged in his heart against his brother. Anger and Wrath are strange Fire to put to our incense. 'Tis a Law writ upon every Gate of Gods house (every Ordinance I mean) at which we are to enter into Communion with God, that we must *Love our Brethren.* When we go to hear the Word, what is the Caveat, but that we should lay aside all malice, envy, and evil-speaking, and as new-born babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word. The Gospel will not speak peace to a wrathful spirit: Anger and malice, like a salt corroding humour in the stomach, makes us puke and cast up the Milk of the Word, that it cannot stay with us for nourishment. Is it the Gospel-Supper thou sit'st at? this is a love-feast; and though it may be eaten with the bitter herbs of sins sorrow, yet not with the sour leaven of wrath and malice, *1 Cor. 11. 18. When ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you, &c.* Now mark what follows, *vers. 20. This is not to eat the Lords Supper.* Christ will not communicate with a wrangling jangling company: When such Guests come, he riseth from his own Table, as David's children did from Absalom's upon the Murder of their brother Amnon, *1 Sam. 13. 29.* And for prayer, you know the Law thereof, *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting,* *1 Tim. 2. 8.* implying, that 'tis impossible to pray in faith and in wrath. *Duobus modis oratio impeditur, si adhuc homo mala commisit, aut si committenti in se ex toto corde non dimittit:* Our prayer may be hindered two ways; By lying in any sin we commit against God: Or in wrath, by not forgiving our brother's committed against us. Those two in our Lords Prayer, cannot be divorced; *Forgive us, as we forgive.* This is that *ferrum in vulnere* (as the same

same Father hath it) which makes our prayers as un-
effectual to us, as the Plaister is to the wound in which
the Bullet still remains.

Now the reason why God is so curious in this
point, is, because Himself is so gracious; and He
being Love, can bid none welcome that are not in
love. The Heathens had such a notion, that the gods
would not like the Sacrifice and Service of any, but
such as were like themselves. And therefore to the
Sacrifices of Hercules, none were to be admitted that
were Dwarfs. To the Sacrifice of Bacchus, a merry
god, none that were sad and penive, as not fitting
their genius. An excellent truth may be drawn from
this their folly. He that would like and please God,
must be like to God. Now our God is a God of
peace; Our heavenly Father merciful; and there-
fore to him none can have friendly access, but those
that are children of peace, and merciful as their Fa-
ther is. Oh! watch then thy heart, that Satans Fire-
Balls (which upon every little occasion he will be
throwing in at thy Window) take not hold of thy
spirit, to kindle any heart-burning in thee against
thy brother. If at any time thou feelst the least
smoak, or smellst the least scent of this fire in thy bo-
som, sleep not till thou hast quencht it; be more
careful to lay this fire in thy heart aside, when thou
goest to bed, than the other that is on thy Hearth.
How canst thou by prayer commit thy self into Gods
hands that night, wherein thou carriest a spark
thereof smothered in thy breast? *Irasci hominis,
iram non perficere, Christiani est*, Jerome. As a frail
man thou canst not hinder, but such a spark may
light on thee, yet if thou wilt prove thy self a
Christian, thou must quench it. Nay more, if thou
wilt shew thy self a Christian, and have thy prayer
find Gods ear or heart open to it, thou must do thy
utmost to quench it in thy brothers heart, as well as
thy own. It is not enough that thou carriest peace
in thy heart to him, except thou endeavourest, that
he may be at peace with thee also. *Math. 5. 23. If
thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remembrest
thy brother hath ought against thee, &c.* Hierom
brings in the Christian here expostulating his cause
with God, why he will not hear his prayer, *Domine,
quare non vis suscipere myrrum meum? quid ad me atti-
net? non est in mea potestate, si Frater meus habet ali-
quid contra me.* What is it to me (Lord) that my

brother is offended with me? I cannot help that; Will
thou not receive my gift for his fault? To whom he
brings God thus answering: *Et quid dicis male
serve? Intelligo animum tuum; Nihil habes?
Amas eum? Quare ergo salutare eum non vis? Vades,
roga eum, ne ille contra te habeat, ut salvari possit.*
What is it naughty servant that thou saist? I under-
stand thy meaning; What is it to thee? Hast thou no-
thing against him? Dost thou love him? Wherefore
then wouldst not thou save his soul? Go and beg of
him to be at peace with thee, that thy Brothers soul
may be saved. I speak the more of this particular,
being sensible what an hour, or rather Age of tempta-
tion we live in, by reason of the sad differences of
judgement among Christians, which have destilled
upon their affections so great a distaste one to ano-
ther, as exulcerates them into wrath and bitterness;
yea, a wonderful cure it will be, if it can be prevented
from ending in an irrecoverable consumption of love
among a great part of this present generation: Espe-
cially considering what malignity is dropt into these
Church-contentions by those National divisions also
that have fallen in with them, or rather sprung from
them; and which drew so sad a Sword among us,
as for many years could find no other sheath
but the Bowels of this then miserable Nation. Oh
what grudges, animosities, and heart-burnings have
these two produced? The Sword (blessed be God)
is at last got into its Scabbard of peace; but have we
not cause to wish that it had been cleaner wiped
when put up, and not such an implacable spirit of
revenge and malice to be found remaining among
many of us, as alas is too common to be met with
every where? The storm without us is over (blessed
be God) but is it not too high within some of our
breasts? The flood of National calamities is asswa-
ged, but now the Tide is down and gone, is there
not a deal of this filth (to name no other) unchari-
table jealousies, bitterness, wrath and revenge, left
behind upon our hearts? enough to breed another
plague and judgement among us, if a flood of Natio-
nal Repentance does not wash away what the Sea
of War and other Confusions have cast up. But
if this were all the mischief they are like to do us, our
case is sad enough; they will hinder our prayers; for
God will not accept such sacrifices as are kindled
with the fire of wrath.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains the fourth cause of a Saints prayer miscarrying (want of Faith, as also what
to pray in faith imports.)

Prayer

Fifthly, The Christians prayer may miscarry for
want of faith. Prayer is the Bow, the Promise
is the Arrow, and Faith the Hand which draws the
Bow, and sends this Arrow with the Hearts message
to Heaven. The Bow without the Arrow is of no
use, and the Arrow without the Bow, as little
worth; and both without the strength of the Hand,
to no purpose. Neither the Promise without Prayer,
nor Prayer without the Promise, nor both without

Faith, avails the Christian any thing. So that what
was said of the Israelites, that they could not enter into
Canaan because of unbelief, the same may be said of
many of our prayers, they cannot enter Heaven with
acceptation, because they are not put up in faith.
Now faith may be considered with a respect to the
person praying, or to the prayer put up. First,
The person must be a believer, but this is not enough;
There must be an act of faith exerted in the prayer,

as well as the habit of faith dwelling in the person. Mark 11. 24. *What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* If the thing be not to be found in the promise that we desire, 'tis a sin to pray for it; if it be, 'tis a sin not to believe, when we pray for it, and that no small one, because thereby, we both prophane an Ordinance, and asperse the Name of the great God.

S E C T. I.

Quest. But what is it to pray in faith?

Ans. First, *Negatively.* It is not to believe that the very thing in specie, or in its proper kind that we pray for, shall be always given. Christ prayed in faith, and was heard, Heb. 5. He believed not the thing in kind to be given, neither was it, yet his prayer was answered; therefore be sure thou learnest the right method of acting thy faith in prayer, which must be taken from the nature of the promise thou putt'st in suit. As water receives its figure (round or square) from the Vessel it is poured into: So our faith is to be shaped by the promise, if that be absolute (as things necessary to salvation are) then thy faith may expect the very thing promised; if otherwise, then thou art not to limit thy faith to the thing it self, but expect money or money-worth; health, or as good as health; deliverance, or better than deliverance. An absolute faith on a conditional promise (without an immediate Revelation, which we must not look for) is fancy, not faith; to commit a sin, not act a grace, this is to be free on Gods Purse without a Grant; for we put more in the conclusion of our faith, than is in the premises of the promise; and this is as bad Divinity as Logick.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, Positively. To pray in faith, is to ask of God in the Name of Christ, what he hath promised, relying on his power and truth for performance, without binding him up to time, manner or means.

First, We must ask what God hath promised, or else we chuse for our selves, and not beg; we subject Gods Will to ours, and not ours to his; we forge a Bond, and then claim it as debt, which is a horrible presumption! He that is his own Promiser, must be his own Pay-Master.

Secondly, To pray in faith, is required that we pray in *Christs Name*; as there can be no faith but on a promise, so no promise can be claimed but in his Name, because they are all both made to him, and performed for him. They are made to him, the Covenant being struck with him: Titus 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye, promised before the world began.* And there was none then existing but Christ to whom the promise could be made: So that as the Child claims his estate in right of his father that purchased it: So we come to our right in the promise, as Heirs of, and co-heirs with Christ. And as the promise was made to him, so it is performed for him, because his Blood shed was the Condition of the Obligation upon which God acknowledged the debt to Christ, and bound himself to perform all

the Articles of the Covenant to his Heirs orderly claiming them at his hands in his Name. 'Tis not therefore enough boldly to urge God with a promise; *Pardon, Lord, for thou hast promised it; grace and glory, for thou hast promised them;* but we must, if we mean to lay our plea legally (I mean according to the Law of faith) plead for these under the protection of his Name. Thus Daniel, Chap. 9. 17. that holy man, laid the stress of his prayer on Christ, *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lords sake.*

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, To this praying in faith is required a relying on God, through Christ, for a gracious answer. Let the former be done, and the creature fail in this, he prays not in faith, but takes the Name of God and Christ in vain. This act of relying is the taking hold on God in prayer, Isa. 64. When Mariners, in a storm, cast out their Anchor, and it comes home again without taking hold on the firm ground (so as to stay the ship, and bear it up against the violence of the Waves,) it gives them no help: So neither doth a handle's prayer that takes no hold on God. Therefore you shall find that when a Christian speeds well in prayer, his happy success is attributed not to naked prayer, but as clothed and impowered with this act of recumbency upon God. 2 Chron. 13. 14. *They cried unto the Lord: Now see ver.* 18. *The children of Judah prevailed because they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers.* He doth but lye in prayer, that doth not relie on God after praying. What he seems to give with one hand to God, he takes from him with another, which is no better than a mocking of God. By praying, we pretend to expect good from him; by not relying, we blot this out, and declare we look for no such matter.

Now this reliance of the soul, hath a twofold way whereby it fastens on God like the Anchors double hook.

First, It takes hold on the power of God; thus Christ in his Agony, Heb. 5. 7. *offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death.* In prayer we open our case to God, declare how sinful, weak, shiftless creatures we are, and then we commit our cause to God. Now as none will put that to another's keeping, which he thinks safe in his own hands; so neither will any deliver it to another, of whose ability he is not first perswaded to effect that which himself is unable to do. See Eliphaz his counsel to Job, Chap. 5. 8. *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:* As if he had said, If I were in your case, I will tell you what course I would take, I would not look this way, or that, but speedily hast me to the Throne of grace; and when once I had told God my very heart, I would trouble my self no more, but commit my cause to him, and discharge my heart of the burden of all its troublesome thoughts: But under what notion would he do all this? The next words will tell us, *Unto God would I commit my cause, which does great things and unsearchable; marvellous things*

things without number. First he would bottom his faith on God as able to do great things, and then leaving his request lodg'd in the arms of such power, he doubted not but he would cast all care away, and enjoy the serenity of his mind, whatever his condition was. Indeed this is the first stone Faith lays in her building. And an error in the foundation, will make the whole house stand weak. Be sure, therefore, thou laist this bottom stone with thy greatest care. Oh! how unbecoming is it to have a great God, and a little faith on this great God! A strong God, and a weak faith on his Almighty power! Unbelief here ravisheth and offereth violence to the very light of Nature: For, his eternal Power and Godhead are known by the visible things of the Creation, Rom. 1. What is not he able to do, that could make so goodly a Fabrick without Materials, Tools, or Workmen! *Crucifige illud verbum, potestne!* Away with that question which so grates the ears of the Almighty; Can he pardon? Can he purge? What cannot he do, that can do what he will!

Secondly, It takes hold on the faithfulness of God to perform the promise: We are directed, in committing our selves to him, to eye his faithfulness; *As unto a faithful Creator,* 1 Pet. 4. 19. The Saints faith

hath been remarkable in staying themselves on this, while yet the mercy they prayed for, lay asleep in its causes: *Psal. 65. 1. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.* See, he stands with his Instrument strung, and tuned, ready to strike up, and bring God in with the Musick of his praise when he shall come with an Answer to his prayer, not the least doubting but that he shall use it upon that joyful occasion; for he speaks without ifs and Ands: *Unto thee shall the vow be performed, O thou that hearest prayer:* And yet that good day was not come; for even then he cries out, *Iniquities prevail against me!* So *Psal. 140. 12. I know the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.* Why? how comes he so confident? *Vers. 12. Surely the righteous shall give thanks to thy Name.* As if he had said, Thou hast a Name for a gracious and faithful God in thy promise, and this thou wilt never suffer to be blotted by failing thy word: (Christian) thou maist venture all thou art worth on the publick faith of Heaven; *His words are pure, as silver tried seven times in a Furnace.* He that will not suffer a Liar, or Covenant-breaker, to set foot on his holy Hill, will much less suffer any one thought of falseness or unfaithfulness to enter into his own most Holy heart.

C H A P. XXII.

Four Rules whereby we may know whether we act faith in prayer or no.

Quest. But how may I know when I thus act faith in prayer?

Ans. First, By the serenity and composure of thy spirit after prayer. Faith may live in a storm, but it will not suffer a storm to live in it. As Faith rises, so the blustering wind of discontented troublesome thoughts go down. In the same proportion that there is faith in the heart, there is peace also; they are joyned together, *Quietness and Confidence, Isa. 30. 15. In returning shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength;* therefore called *peace in believing, Rom. 15. 13.* Even where 'tis weakest, it will not let the unquietness of the heart pass without a chiding. *Psal. 42. Why art thou disquieted, O my soul! trust still in God.* What! Soul! no sooner off thy knees, but clamorous! Hast not thou made thy moan to a God able to help thee, and will not that ease thee! Faith disburdens the soul in prayer of that which oppresses it: Whereas the unbelieving soul still carries about it the cause of its trouble, because it had not strength to cast forth its sorrows, and roul its cares upon God in the duty. Christian, dost thou carry away the same burden on thy back from prayer, which thou didst bring to it? surely thou didst want faith to lift it off thy shoulder. Had Faith been there, and that been active and lively, it would have bestowed this elsewhere, and brought thee away with a light heart: As *Hannah*, who rose from praying to eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

And as Christ who kneeled down with as sorrowful a heart, as ever any, but comes off with a Holy courage to go and meet his approaching death, and his bloody enemies now on the way to attach him. *Arise* (faith he to his Disciples) *let us be going, behold he is at hand that doth betray me, Mat. 26.* May it not put us to the blush to think, that we should come less satisfied from Gods presence, than we do sometimes from a sorry man? If you were poor, and had a rich friend that bids you send your children to him, and he will provide for them; would not this ease your mind of all your cares and distracting thoughts concerning their maintenance? And doth not God promise more than this comes to, when he bids us be careful for nothing, but let your requests be made known to God with thanks-giving?

Secondly, Dost thou continue praying even when God continues to deny? An unbelieving heart may have some metal at hand, but will be sure to jade in a long journey. Faith will throw in the Net of Prayer again, and again, as long as God commands, and the Promise encourageth. The Grey-hound hunts by sight; when he cannot see his game, he gives over running; but the true Hound by scent; he hunts over hedge and ditch, though he sees not the Hare he pursues all the day long. An unbelieving heart may be is drawn out upon some visible probabilities, & sensible hopes of a mercy coming, to pray, but when these are out of sight, his heart fails him; but

but Faith keeps the scent of the Promise, and gives not over the chafe.

Thirdly, Dost thou stint God, or canst thou trust him to answer thy prayer in his own way without thy prescription? When we deal with a man, whose ability or faithfulness we have in doubt, then we labour to make sure of him by tying him up to our terms: but if we stand assured of their power and truth, we leave them to themselves. Thus the Patient sends for the Physician, desires his help, but leaves him to write his own Bill. The Merchant sends over his goods to his Factor, and relies on him to make such returns, as his wisdom tells him will come to the best Market. Thus the believing soul, when he hath opened his heart to God in prayer, resigns himself to the goodness, wisdom and faithfulness of God to return an Answer: *Remember me, O God (said Nehemiah) concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy, Chap. 13. 22.* See here, this good man makes bold to be Gods Remembrancer, but dares not be his Counsellour or Prescriber; he remits the shaping of the Answer to the greatness of his mercy. Hence it follows, that whatever way God cometh in, the believing soul bids him welcome. Doth he pray for health, and mis of that? yet he blesteth God for support under sickness. Doth he pray for his children, and they notwithstanding prove a cross? yet he finds an answer another way, and satisfies himself with it. After many a prayer that David had put up no doubt for his family, we find him entertaining an Answer to those prayers with a composed spirit, though they came not in at the fore-door (by having the mercy in the Letter.) *2 Sam. 23. 5. Though my house be not so, yet God hath made a Covenant with me, &c. and this he tells us, is all his desire.* Indeed a Believer cannot miss his desires, *Psal. 145. He will fulfil the desires of those that fear him.* Because they disown those desires which clash with Gods Will. Who could pray more fervently for their children, than Job did for his? He was with God for them every day; but after all his Religious care of them, he meets with heavy tydings, and hears them to be made a sacrifice by death, for whom he had offered up so many sacrifices to God; yet doth he not foolishly charge God, or say it was in vain that he pray'd: No, that Oyntment was not lost, the favour whereof was poured into his own soul, from the posture of which he might read a gracious Answer, in the supporting grace that enabled him to love and blest God over the Grave-stone of his slain children.

Fourthly, By the souls comporting it self towards the means used for obtaining the mercy prayed for.

First, If thou prayest in Faith, it will set thee to use other means besides prayer. Mark how the Apostle joyns these together, *Rom. 12. 11, 12. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, continuing instant in prayer.* As faith useth her wings of prayer to fly to heaven, so she useth her feet of duty and obedience with which she walks and bestirs her self on earth.

Secondly, Faith will make thee, as use means, so

to be choice of the means thou usest for the obtaining what thou bespeakest of God in prayer. Faith is a working grace, but it will be set on work by none but God. Am I in Gods way, faith Faith? Is this the means he hath appointed? If it be not, away he turns from it, disdaining to work with any of the Devils tools. God can Answer my prayer, faith the Believer, without the help of my sin. If riches be good for me, I need not be at the cost to purchase them with a Lye or a Cheat. If health be a mercy, he can send me it, though I advise not with the Devil's Doctors. If joy and comfort, there is no need to take down the Devil's Musick. If times be evil, he can hide me; without running under the skirt of this great man, and that, by base flattery and dissimulation. When Ezra had committed himself and his company to God (now on their march towards Jerusalem) by a solemn day of fasting and Prayer, and had made a holy boast of his God, what he would do for them that seek him; he thought it both unbeseeming his professed faith, and also dishonourable to his God, whom he had so magnified in the hearing of the Persian King, to beg any Armed Troops for a Convoy to them in their way, lest his faith should be brought into suspicion for an empty bravado, and groundless confidence; *Chap. 8. 22. I was ashamed to require of the King a band of Soldiers and Horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we spake unto the King, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.*

Thirdly, If thou accest faith in prayer, thy faith will make thee not only choice of the means thou usest, but curious and careful in using the means that God chuseth for thee. Thou wilt be afraid lest it should stand in Gods light, by stealing thy confidence from him to trust in it. Faith will teach thee to use means as Gods Ordinance, but rely on God to blest it. While Faiths hand is on the Plough, her eye is in heaven: *Annus non ager facit fructum*; The influences of Heaven, not the Tillage of the Husband, make it a fruitful year. Sometimes the Physician appoints a powder to be taken in Wine or Beer: Now 'tis not the Beer or Wine that does the cure, but the powder, which they are only used to convey and carry into the stomach. Thus mercy is handed over to us by the blessing of God in the use of means, yet think not the means do it, but the blessing of God mingled with it, and infused into it.

Fourthly, and lastly, If thou accest faith in prayer, as thou wilt be careful to improve means when God provides them, so thou wilt not suspend thy faith, when God denies them. The believing soul dares not trust to the means when he hath them, therefore he dares not distrust God when he wants them. Faith knows though God useth means, yet he needs none. The Sun and showers are the means he useth for the growth of the grafs and herbs; yet he made these to grow out of the earth, *Gen. 1. 11.* before there was Sun or rain. Ploughing and sowing is the ordinary means whereby man is provided with bread: But he fed Israel with bread without their pains and husbandry. Ships, the means to waft us over the Seas;

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But God carried *Israel* through the Red Sea without ship or boat. May be times are hard, and thou art poor; thy charge is great, and thy comings in little, with the Widow in the Prophet, thou art making thy last Cake of the little meal that is left, to reason and sense thou must either beg, steal, or die. Canst thou now upon praying to thy God, wait upon his promise which tells thee, *Verily, thou shalt be fed?* *Psal.* 37. And on his providence, which records his care of the Sparrows on purpose, to assure us he will much

more provide for his children? or at least dost thou chide thy heart for its distrustful fears after praying, charging it to hope in God, to whom thou hast made thy moan? Truly, if thy heart hath not some hold on God after duty, to stay it, more than before in this thy streight; either thou hast no faith, or if thou hast faith, thou didst not act it in that prayer. True faith will either expel these dejections of heart, or at least protest against them.

CHAP. XXIII.

The second Policy or Stratagem, with which Satan labours to defeat the praying Saint, v.z. To buz false fears into his ear, that his prayer is not heard.

SEcondly, Now we come to the second Stratagem that Satan useth to hinder the success of the Christians prayer (which I call'd a partial hinderance, or miscarriage thereof) when the prayer it self is not lost (which comes to pass only when it finds not acceptance with God) but when the Christian doth not believe on Earth, that his prayer is heard in Heaven (though indeed it is) and so by his questioning thereof, he loseth the Revenue of that present peace, which otherwise would be paid in unto him from the expectation of its certain return with a joyful answer: As a Merchant that gives his Ship for cast away, when indeed it is safe, and richly laden, (only stays for a fair wind) he not knowing or believing this, puts himself to as much trouble and sorrow, as if it were in truth, as he feared. Fancy and imagination, even when without ground and reason, is able to produce real effects and sad consequences in the minds of men. The false news of *Joseph's* death, caused as much sorrow to old *Jacob*, yea more, than if he had seen him laid out, and had followed him to the grave. The *Sailor* from a fear his Prisoners were gone, and he accountable for them, had foredone himself by falling on his own Sword, if *Paul* had not seasonably cried out, *We are all here, do thy self no harm.* And truly our unbelieving fears have no less power upon our hearts; they rob the Christian of the joy of his life (and man is but a sower piece of clay when that is gone) 'tis not praying, but believing prayer is heard, that will make a glad heart, and a cheerful countenance. *Hannah* often prayed, she was acquainted with the work many years, yet never had the burden of her spirit taken off, till she had faith she should speed: Yea moreover, they weaken the spirit of prayer; he that expects little from prayer, will not be much in prayer. That Trade is best rendered, which 'tis hoped will pay a man best for his pains in it. *Who is there among you* (saith God) *that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on my Altar for nought,* *Mal.* 1. 11. The Husbandman throws his seed freely, because he sows in hope; and his precious seed on his fattest soyl, because there he looks to find it again with the greatest encrease. This made *David* like praying work so well, that he will never leave it; *I have prayed, and the Lord hath heard, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

As a Merchant finding his sweet gain come troubling in, converts his whole estate into stock: so *David* devotes himself wholly to prayer, *For my love, they are my adversaries,* *רַחֲמֵינוּ וְהוֹדָה*, *Psal.* 109. 2. *But I was Prayer.* This was the only weapon I lift up for my defence against all their Darts: Whereas unbelief betrays the soul unto many uncomely thoughts of God, which reflect sadly upon his Name, so as to weaken his reputation in the creatures thoughts, and bring him either to a disuse of this duty, or hopeless performance of it; and this Satan loves alive. When a Merchant thinks his goods miscarry, he grows presently jealous of his Factor, questioning his care, faithfulness, or ability to dispatch his business, such whisperings we shall hear, if we listen to our unbelieving hearts sometimes, when our prayers make not so short and quick a Voyage as we desire. It was a high charge that *Job* brought against God (though he lived to see he had little reason to do it; yea, afterward charged himself for charging God) *I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me; I stand up, and thou regardest me not,* *Job* 30. 20. This holy man was now as deep in Gods books, and as great a favourite with him, as ever, yet so far had Satan wound into him, as to make him listen unto those false reports which he brought unto him of God (taking the advantage of his present cloudy providence to colour his calumnies) in so much that he began to give credit unto this liar. Now if this may become a stone of offence to a *Job*, how much more mayst thou fear dashing thy foot against it? Let it be thy care to counter-mine Satan in this his spiteful Plot against God and thee. Surely it should not be a little matter that makes thee throw up thy prayers, and give away so rich an Adventure as thou hast swimming in this bottom. *Esaü* hath the brand of a profane person, for so cheaply parting with his inheritance; if thou beest a believer, thou art an Heir of promise, and amongst promises this is not the least, That what thou askest in Christs Name, believing, thou shalt receive. Now it is too like his profaneness to part with this piece of thy heritage (which thou canst not do without impeaching the faithfulness of God that gave thee an estate in the promise.) We highly commend *Job* for his heroick resolution at another time; *Chap.* 27. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will*

not remove my integrity from me. How much more shouldst thou say to Satan, God forbid that I should justifie thee thou wicked fiend, or thy false charge against my God, I will hold fast his integrity and faithfulness till I die. Surely *Daniel*, who ventured his life rather than not pray, would have parted with a thousand lives, rather than have given his prayers for lost, and thereby have blotted the good Name of God, whose faithfulness stands bound to return every prayer of faith with a gracious answer into the Saints bosom.

But the more to fortifie you against this design of Satan, let us inquire into a few of those Arguments with which Satan (abusing the Christians credulity)

leads him into this temptation, if not absolutely to conclude, yet unbelievingly to dispute and question it in his heart, whether his prayer be heard or no. I shall reduce them to three heads.

First, The first Argument by which he scruples the Christian, and nourishes his unbelieving fears, is taken from those sinful infirmities that cleave to his person and prayer.

Secondly, From the deportment of God to him in and after prayer.

Thirdly, From the common providence of God, that dispenseth the same things to the wicked without praying, which the Saints receive praying.

CHAP. XXIV.

Arms the Saint against Satan's first cavil at his prayers.

First, Satan makes the Christian out of love with himself and duty, from the sinful infirmities cleaving to both, thereby to quash his hope of any favourable reception that his prayer hath found in Heaven. What! thy stammering prayers make musick in Gods ear! Will the Lord fowl his fingers with thy besmeared duties? If thou wert a *Samuel* or *Daniel*, and couldst claim thy place among those Worthies that are Renowned for the Eminent service they have done God in their generation, then thou mightest hope to have the ear of God to thy suit; but thou alas art a puny stripling, a forward child, in whom there is more sin than grace to be found; and dost thou think to be heard? Truly though this Argument weighs little, having no countenance from the tenor of the Covenant, whose privileges are not impropriated to a few Favourites more eminent in grace than their brethren, but stand open to the whole Family, it being a common salvation, and like precious faith, that all the Saints partake of; yet is it the great Bug-bear with which many of them are scared.

A word or two therefore to arm thee against it; only this premised (which I must take for granted) that these sinful infirmities are lamented, and not cocker'd by thee (that indeed would turn infirmity into presumption) as also that thou neglectest not to apply the most effectual means for their cure, though (as in hereditary diseases) all the Physick thou takest, will not here perfectly rid thee of them. This granted, for thy comfort know, they are not so offensive to God, as to thy self. Thy prayers pass such a refining in Christs Mediation, that their ill scent is taken away. Doth thy scruple arise from the sinful failings of thy Daily Conversation and Christian course? To remove this, observe how the Spirit of God when he instanceth in *Elias*, as a person whose prayers were exceedingly prevalent with God, doth not describe him by the transcendancy of his grace above others, but by his infirmities like unto them? *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not*, Jam. 5. 17. As if God should say, Were

I so curious in my scrutine, as you fear, *Elias* his prayer would have been stopt, for he was not without his infirmities. How many failings do we find in *David*'s unseemly carriage before *Achish*, for which he was turned out of the Kings presence under the notion of a Mad-man? yet his prayer at that time, when he betrayed so many unbelieving fears, found favour with God, *Psal. 34. 4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and deliver'd me from all my fears.* Read the Title, and you shall find it, *A Psalm of David who changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.* Are they the sinful infirmities which scape thee in the duty of prayer? Canst thou find more in any prayer thou puttest up, than were in the Disciples for one so short? where they exercised so little faith, that Christ calls it *no faith*, Mark 4. 40. *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?* Yea, they pray to Christ, and chide him in the same breath, *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* Yet Christ could find sincerity hid (like *Saul*) in this stuff of their infirmities, and granted their request. 'Tis true he rebuked them, but it is as true that he rebuked the wind also. Gods promise for hearing of prayer, shall not be made void by the Saints weakness in prayer: Yea, for thy further comfort know that the less power these have to shake or disturb thy spirit in expecting a gracious Answer, the more kindly will God take it at thy hand. *Abraham* (it is said) *believed, not considering his own body, or the deadness of Sarahs womb;* and for this was highly commended, because he thereby did signally glorifie the power of God, to which, he believed their bodily indisposition should not be any obstacle. Truly thus it will be highly pleasing to God, if thou canst relie, not staggering at thy spiritual indispositions, & that deadness of thy heart which rises up as a great Objection in thy thoughts against the success of thy prayer: For by this, thou givest Christ both the honour of His Death, by which he purchased this free access for thy weak prayers to the Throne of Grace, and also of his Intercession which clarifies them from all their sinful mixtures.

C H A P. XXV.

Contains a Three-fold Argument which Satan draws from Gods deportment to the Christian in and after Prayer, to make him question its acceptance.

Secondly, Satan draws his Argument from Gods deportment to the soul in and after prayer; in which, three things he commonly insists upon, by them to create trouble to the Christians thoughts.

First, His silence, which he would have the Christian interpret to be Gods slighting or disregarding of him and his prayer.

Secondly, His frowns, from which he would have him conclude, neither he nor his duty are accepted.

Thirdly, His not giving the mercy in kind; and this he tells the Christian, amounts to a denial.

S E C T. I.

First, His silence after prayer. As wicked men sometimes sin, and God keeps silence, which makes them bold to think God approves of them and their way: So sometimes a gracious soul prays, and God holds his peace here also; and the poor soul begins to fear, that neither his person nor his duty, are approved of God. Now Satan knowing what thoughts are like to rise in the Christians own heart, falls in, and joyns issue with the Christians bosom-enemy, labouring to confirm him in these his unbelieving fears.

To disentangle and help thee out of this bryar:

First, Learn to distinguish betwixt Gods hearing, and his answering the Saints prayer. Every faithful prayer is heard, and makes an acceptable report in Gods ear as soon as it is shot; but God doth not always thus speedily answer it. The father at the reading of his Sons Letter (which comes haply on some begging errand) likes the motion, his heart closeth with it, and a grant is there past; but takes his own time to send his dispatch, and let his son know this. Princes have their Books of Remembrance, wherein they write the names of their Favourites whom they intend to prefer, haply some years before their gracious purpose opens it self to them. *Mordecai's* Name stood in *Ahasuerus* his Book some while before his Honour was conferr'd. Thus God Records the names of his Saints and their prayers. *The Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, of them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name, Mal. 3. 16.* But they hear not of God in his providential answer haply a long time after. *Abraham* prays for a child, and is heard, but how many years interpose, before he hath him in his Arms? Truly so many, that he goes in to *Hagar* (partly by his Wives counsel, and his own weakness) to obtain that with a By-blow for which God himself had undertaken. Take heed, Christian, thou beest not led into this temptation, to question whether God hears thee, because thou hearest not from him presently. Be patient, and thou shalt find, the longer a mercy goes before its delivery, the more perfect it will come forth at last. God gave a speedy

answer to *Abraham* for his son *Ishmael*, *Oh! that Ishmael might live. I have heard thee, saith God concerning Ishmael, Gen. 17. 20.* Indeed he flourished, and spread into a great Nation, before *Isaac's* stem almost budded. What a small number was the Family of *Jacob* at their going down into *Egypt*? but when the Date of Gods Bond was near expiring, and the time of the promise grew nigh, then God paid interest for his stay. None gain more at the Throne of Grace, than those who Trade for time, and can forbear the payment of a mercy longest.

Secondly, consider, when thou findest the deepest silence in Gods providence concerning the thing prayed for, then thou hast a loud answer in the promise. Say not therefore, Who shall ascend to Heaven to bring thee intelligence whether thy prayer hath got safe thither, and had favourable audience in Gods ear? God himself hath saved thee this labour, the promise will satisfy thee, which assures thee, that if it be duly qualified, it cannot find the heart of God shut against it, *The fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much, Jam. 5.* So assured have the Saints been of this, that they before any inkling from providence hath been heard (to bring them the news of a mercy coming) have taken up joy upon the credit of the naked promise, and feasted themselves with the hopes of what they expected, but had not yet received at the cost and charge of Gods faithfulness with which the promise is sealed; *In God will I praise his Word, Psal. 56. 4.* Mark the phrase: He had not as yet the desired mercy, only a word of promise that it should come; Now considering the power and truth of God the promiser, he is as merry as if he were put in possession of it, and pays his praises before God performs the promise.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, The second thing which Satan gathers from Gods deportment towards the Christian, thereby to bring the hearing of his prayer into question in his anxious thoughts, is some anger, which seems to sit upon his brow against the Christian. It cannot be denied, but sometimes a dear Saint of God may go away from duty with an aking heart, by reason of the sad impressions of an angry God left upon his spirit. And when thus it fares with the Christian, Satans time is come (he thinks) to lead him into this temptation, by perswading him he may read what entertainment his prayer had at Gods hands in the language of his countenance, and his carriage towards him. If God (saith he) had heard thy prayer, would he handle thee thus? No sure, he would rather have taken thee up into his arms, and kissed thee with the kisses of his mouth, than thus trample thee under his feet. Thou shouldst have had Darts of love shot from his pitiful eye, to intimate the purposes of his grace,

grace, and not Arrows headed with his wrath, to stick in thy soul, and thus drink up thy very spirits. Can these be the wounds of a Friend? This the department of one that means thee well? This was the temptation which ruffled Job's thoughts, and im-bitter'd his spirit, Chap. 9. 17. He could not believe God answered his prayer, *because he broke him with his tempest.* As if Gods mercy came alwayes in the still voice, and never in the Whirl-wind.

Now in this case take this double word of counsel.

First, Enquire whether this Tempest comes to find any *Jonah* in thy ship, whether it takes thee sinning, or soaking in any past sin unrepented; or whether thy conscience diligently listned to, doth witness that thou art sincere in thy course, though compassed with many failings: If it overtakes thee in any run-away voyage with *Jonah*, or rambling course with the *Prodigal* from thy fathers house, then indeed thou hast reason to question, yea, 'tis beyond all question, that an acceptable prayer in this posture cannot drop from thy lips. What! run from God, and then send to him thy prayers! This is to desire mercy to spend upon thy lust: But if upon thy faithful search, thou findest this storm overtakes thee in the way of duty and exercise of thy sincerity, like the tempest that met the *Disciples* at Sea (when at Christs command they launched forth) Then be not discouraged; for 'tis ordinary with God, to put on the disguise of an angry countenance; and to use rough language, when his heart is resolved upon ways of mercy, and meditates love to his people. *Jacob*, you know, wrestled hard, and long, before victory inclined to his side. And the Woman of *Canaan* was kicked away like a Dog, with harsh language, who at last was owned of Christ for a dear child, and sent away to her hearts content. Sincerity needs fear no ill from God. This very consideration kept *Job's* head at another time above water, *Job*. 16. 12. There we find God taking him by the Neck, shaking him as it were to pieces, and setting him up for his mark: But *vers*. 17. this upheld his troubled spirit, that all this befell him walking in the way of obedience; *Not for any injustice in my hands, also my prayer is pure:* wherefore he rears up his confidence, *vers*. 19; 20. *Behold my witness is in heaven, and my record on high. My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.* The holy man was not for all this scared from the Throne of grace, but still look on God, though with tears in his eyes, expecting good news at last, after so much bad. And we have warrant to do the same, 1 *Job*. 3. 21. *If our heart condemns us not, then we have confidence towards God:* And this brings me to the second word of counsel I have to give thee.

Secondly, Enquire whether under these frowns from God, there be yet a spirit of prayer working in thee. Haply thou canst not deny but that thy heart is rather stirr'd up from these to lament after the Lord with more restless sighs and groans, to pray with more feeling and fervency, than driven away from duty; This spirit of prayer upheld in thee, may assure thee of these two things.

First, That the cloud of anger which seems to sit on Gods brow, is not in his heart. It is but a thin veil, through which thy faith might see the working of his bowels towards thee. The presence of the Spirit of God at work thus in a soul, cannot stand with his real anger. If his wrath were up, this in thee would be down. Thou should'st have him soon calling back this his Ambassadour of peace, at least suspend and withdraw his assistance. When that sad breath was made between God and *David* in the matter of *Uriah*, *David's* Harp was presently out of tune, his right hand had forgot its cunning, and the spirit of prayer received a sad damp in his heart. Where is the Psalm to be found that was penn'd by *David* in that *interregnum* (as I may so say) of his grace? I do not say he did never pray all the time he lay soaking in that sin; but those prayers were not fit to be joyned with the holy breathings of that Spirit which acted him before his fall, and after his recovery: And therefore, good man, when by repentance he came to himself, like one recovering out of a dangerous sickness (which had for a time taken away his senses) he begins to feel himself weak, and how much the Spirit of grace was by his sin enfeebled in him, which makes him so vehemently beg, that God would *renew a right spirit in him, and not take his holy Spirit from him*, *Psalm*. 51. The Spirit is so choice and peculiar a mercy, that if thou canst find lively actings of his grace in thee (and where are they more sensibly felt than in prayer, helping the soul to sighs and groans which cannot be uttered?) that thou canst not in reason think God is not friends with thee, though it were at present as dark as midnight with thy soul.

Secondly, It may assure thee that his ear is open to thy cry, when his face is hid from thine eye. For consider but who this Spirit is that thus helps thee in prayer, and furnisheth thee with all thy spiritual Ammunition with which thou so plyest; and batterest the Throne of Grace. Is he not one that knows the mind of God? and that would not have a hand in that Petition which should not be welcome to Heaven? Having therefore this assistance from the Spirit, doubt not thy acceptance with the Father. In a word, the Spirit that helps thee to thy groans and sighs in prayer, is no other than that God thou prayest to, and will God deny himself? This I conceive part, if not the principal part of that Scriptures meaning, *Isa*. 45. 19. *I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain:* That is, whenever I stir up a soul to pray, and empower him with my Spirit to perform it feelingly, fervently, and after a holy manner, it is always to purpose. God never said thus to any, Seek ye me in vain.

SECTION III

Thirdly, The third thing from which Satan takes his advantage to breed scruples in the Christians mind concerning the acceptance of his prayer, is the denial of the mercy in kind which is prayed for. We are prone enough to have such thoughts our selves, and Satan will not be wanting to feed any bad humour that is stirring in us. Or if our hearts seem pacified

Job's
 Pacified with this dealing of God, he hath his ways and wiles to conjure up this evil spirit of discontent and unbelief. On this errand he sent *Jobs wife*, to make him think and speak evil of God. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity?* As if he had said, What art thou at thy old work? Still praying, and praising God? Dost thou not see how much he regards thee, or thy serving of him? What hast thou got by all thy devotion? Is not thy estate gone? Thy children slain and buried in one grave? And thy self left a poor loathsome Cripple? Thy life serving for nothing but to make thee feel thy present misery, and feed on thy past crosses. Indeed it requires a good insight into the nature of the promises, and the divers ways God takes to fulfil them, to enable us to spell an answer out of a denial of the thing we pray for; yet such a good understanding have all that do his Commandments, *Psal. 111. 10.* They can clear God, and justify his faithfulness in all his dealings, though when he comes to answer their prayers he chooseth not to enter in at that door which they set open in their own thoughts and hopes for him, nor treads in the very steps of their express desires. The whole *Psalms* contains a testimony given to the faithfulness of God in his providential works, at which though a carnal cursory eye (from the mysteries hid therein) is scandalized, and takes offence, yet the gracious soul by his more curious observance of, and enquiry into them, finds a sweet harmony between them and the promise, and therefore he concludes, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments. His praise endureth for ever.* They having a key to Gods Character, can read the hand of his providence, and so are able to praise him (knowing him faithful) when others are ready to curse him. But to help thee out, or keep thee from falling into this temptation, Thou art in the first place to consider, what mercy it is that God denies thee: Is it not of that sort of blessings which are not necessary unto thy happiness as a Saint? Such all temporal mercies are. The Kingdom of God consists not in meat and drink; Thou wilt find an absolute denial for no other; he hath bid us take no denial for his love and favour, grace and glory, *Psal. 105. 4. Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore.* That is, Be not put off for these, but live and die at Gods door till he brings this Alms to thee. Well, we will take this for granted. 'Tis a temporal mercy thou art denied.

Now when thou art tempted to question the love of God, or acceptance of thy prayer, let me desire thee to weigh this threefold consideration.

First, Consider how ill God may take this at thy hand, and that in a double respect. First, That thou dost suspect his love upon so slight and trivial a matter, as the temporal enjoyments of this life are, which he thinkshave not worth enough to be put into the promise any otherwise than they are subservient to the spiritual and eternal blessings of the Covenant; *Math. 6. Seek first the Kingdom of heaven, and these things shall be added unto you.* That is, as you need them. He casts them into the other (more grand blessings) as a Tradesman would do thread and Paper, or a skein of silk, unto a parcel of rich commodities that a Customer buys of him. Suppose a

child should ask his father for money to buy some toy or trifle (that pleaseth his green head) but the father denies him the thing: if now the child should go and make proclamation in the open street to the disgrace of his father, that his father did neither love nor regard him (though he wants neither food nor rayment,) Would this be well taken at the child's hand? This thou dost, Christian, in this case (though thou thinkest not so much;) And hath not thy Heavenly Father more reason to question thy love, for taking away his good Name, than thou to suspect his for his denial? But again, He may take it ill, that thou hast aspersed his wisdom. Is there no way but this for the wise God to shew his love, and answer thy prayer? Cannot he deny health, and give patience? take away thy estate, and turn it into contentation? teaching thee to be abased, and to bless God thou art made low? He that will make thee so happy in Heaven, where few of this worlds enjoyments shall be seen, cannot he make thy life comfortable on Earth without some of them?

Secondly, Consider how thou prayedst when thou didst meet with this denial. Didst thou pray peremptorily, and absolutely, or conditionally, with submission to the Will of God? If peremptorily, thou wert beside the rule, and art the cause why thy prayer came back without its errand. God will not hear, or bear commanding prayers. He that must have a temporal mercy, if he gets it, he may have a spiritual curse, but is sure to have a temporal cross: So *Dalilah* proved to *Sampson*, who would not take his Parents counsel, but must have her whatever comes of it: *Get her me, for she pleaseth me well, Judg. 14. 4.* But he paid dearly for his choice. May be such an enjoyment pleaseth thee well, thy carnal heart is in love with it, and that sets thee a praying inordinately for it. Alas, poor creature, if thou hadst it, what wouldst thou do with it? thou wouldst fondly lay thy head in its lap, and let it rock thy grace asleep, and then betray thee into the hand of some sin and judgment! But if thou sayest that thou prayedst with a submissive spirit, on condition it liked God as well as thy self, if so, why then dost thou now recant thy prayer, seeing God hath declared his Will, that it is not good for thee to have thy desire? Wilt thou not be determined by him, to whom thou didst refer thy self? Hast thou not reason to think that God takes the best way for thee? There is never a prayer put up, but God doth as it were weigh and ponder it, and then his love sets his wisdom on work to make such a return, as may be most for his own glory, and his childs good. Now it being the product of such infinite wisdom and love, thou oughtst to acquiesce in it, yea to praise God for it: Thus did *David* in a great strait, *Psal. 22. O my God, I cry in the day-time, and thou hearest not.* Well, what hears God from him, now he hears nothing from God (as to the deliverance prayed for?) no murmuring nor cavilling at Gods proceedings; Nay, he hears the quite contrary: for he justifies and praises God, *Vers. 3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!*

Thirdly, Observe whether thou canst not gather something from the manner of Gods denying the thing prayed for, which may sweeten it to thee.
 Haply

Haply thou shalt find he denies thee, but it is with a smiling countenance, and utters it in with some expression of grace and favour, that may assure thee, His denial proceeds not from displeasure. As you would do with a dear friend, who, may be, comes to borrow a sum of Money of you; lend it you dare not, because you see plainly, it is not for his good; but in giving him the denial, lest he should misinterpret it, as proceeding from want of love and respect, you therefore Preface it in with some kind language of your hearty affection to him, as that you love him, and therefore deny him, and shall be ready to do for him more than that comes to. Thus God sometimes wraps up his denials in such sweet sugared intimations of his love, as prevent all jealousies from arising in the hearts of his people. When *David* was denied to build a Temple for God, as was in his heart to do, God gave him a large testimony of his affection, how highly he accepted his good will therein; though he should not build a Temple for him, yet his desire was so kindly taken, that God would build a house for him that should last for ever. Thus sometimes a faithful Minister prays earnestly, that God would bless his labours to the converting of his people, and is denied; yet intimations of Gods love to his person are dropt, with a promise, that however, *his reward is with the Lord*; so that his prayer (though denied as to them) is returned with peace into his own bosom. Another prays passionately, Oh that he might see *Jerusalem* a quiet habitation, and that Truth and Peace might

flourish in his days; this may be is not granted, because his desire antedates the period, which God hath fixed in his purpose for the fulfilling of his promise to his Church: but he withal, manifests his love to him, and expresseth how highly he resents his love to the Church. Thus God did by *Daniel*, to whom an *Angel* was sent, to let him know what kind entertainment his prayer had, and that he was a man *greatly beloved of God*, Dan. 9. 11. So in temporal mercies, haply thou art pleading with God for deliverance out of this trouble, and that affliction, and it is denied thee, but a message with the denial that recompenceth it double: Maybe, some sweet illaples of his love he drops into thy bosom, or assurance of seasonable succours, that shall be sent in to enable thee to charge through them with Faith and Victory. So God dealt by *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. I hope now thou wilt not say thy prayer is lost. When *Saul* sought his fathers Asses, was he not shrewdly hurt to find a Kingdom instead of them? The holy women that went to the Sepulchre to anoint the body of *Jesus* with their spices, did not lose their labour, though they found him risen; were they, thinkest thou, sorry for that? What are all the enjoyments of the world to the spiritual mercies and comfort of the promises which thou findest in thy attendance on God? not so much as the dead body to our risen Saviour; thou findest not some dead creature comfort, but thou meet'st with embraces from a living God.

CHAP. XXVI.

How to know whether a mercy comes to us by common providence, or as a gracious answer to prayer, resolved.

4. **T**HE fourth and last thing that Satan abuseth the Christian with, to make him doubtful of the acceptance of his prayer, and also to question, when a mercy is given in after prayer, Whether it comes as a gracious answer to it or no, is this, That the wicked themselves have many, and those the same temporal mercies issued out unto them by the hand of common providence without prayer, which he receives that performs this duty. Now, saith Satan, How knowest thou that thy mercies come to thee as an answer of thy prayer, and not at the door of common providence with them? For the extricating thee out of this snare, thou must know, that we are not to expect extraordinary wayes to determine this, but must satisfie our selves with what light the Word of God affords, which is able to resolve, not only this, but all our cases of conscience. 'Tis true, that God doth sometimes cast in some such circumstances, as bring an evidence with them, that the mercy lies to us on the wings of prayer. As, when upon *Abrahams servants* praying at the Well for Gods gracious conduct and help to dispatch his Masters business prosperously, that *Rebekah* should presently come forth, and by her kind carriage and invitation, so fitly answer the mould of his prayer, even as the Lock doth the key made for it. Here heaven

declared to his very sense, that his prayer found the right way to heaven. When upon prayer the mercy is thus cast in strangely and suddenly without the concurrence of second causes, yea when they all lie under a visible sentence of death, and the thing is put beyond the activity of their sphere to work; Here there is no Rival to stand in competition with prayer. Thus when the *Apostles* healed the sick upon a short prayer darted up to heaven, not so much as a Doctors advice ask'd in the cure. When *Peter* knockt at the door where the Church was praying for him, what but prayer bound his Keepers senses so fast in the chains of sleep, and made those with which *Peter* was bound, to fall off without any kind hand to help, but Heavens? What made the Iron Gate so officious to open to him that had no key in his hand to unlock it? Surely we must confess, Prayer open'd heavens door, and heaven, at the Churches prayer, open'd the prison door. Yet, 'tis as true, that more commonly mercies that are won by prayer, come not with this pomp and observation; but, as converting grace oft steals into the hearts of some with less terror and noise of humiliation, than it doth into others: So truly, do answers to prayer (and that more commonly) come with more silence, and in the ordinary road by the concurring help of

second

second causes. As the Christian praying for the temporal provisions of this life, God answers his prayer by blessing his diligence in his Calling. The sick Christian praying, hath his food and physick thereby sanctified, and so recovers. Now, though God hath left himself at liberty, either to send his mercies by secondary hands, or when he pleaseth to be the Messenger himself, and bring them in an extraordinary way with his immediate hand; yet hath he not left us at liberty to leave the ordinary road, and neglect the means, under a pretence of expecting extraordinary ways to have our desires.

Now as to this ordinary way of giving in mercies in answer to prayer, these two things are to be enquired for.

First, Enquire whether thou (who didst put up the prayer) beest in a Covenant-state. When God gives a mercy in answer to prayer, He is said to remember his Covenant, *Psal. 105. 34. compared with vers. 8. and to be mindful of his Covenant, Psal. 111. 5.* His eye is first on the person, taking notice who he is, whether his child or no, and then his ear is open to his cry; *Psal. 34. 15. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. Who art thou my son?* said Isaac to Jacob, before he gave him the blessing. If God sees thou art not his child, (and his eyes are not dim like old Isaacs that he can be deceived) thy prayer is not accepted. Indeed neither canst thou in that state pray (in a Gospel sense) nor God graciously bid thy prayer welcome: for the spirit of prayer is a Covenant-grace, and interest in the mediation of Christ, a Covenant-privilege; without both which no prayer is accepted. God hears not any that have not his Spirit to pray in them, and his Son to pray for them; and none have these, but such as are in a Covenant-state.

Secondly, Enquire what thy frame of heart was in the duty of prayer, and also after its performance. Thy not being in a Covenant-state, will prove thy prayer was not heard, and consequently, that the mercy received, came not as a gracious answer to it: But thy being in a Covenant-state, is an insufficient ground for thee to conclude, that this particular prayer that now thou putt'st up is accepted; because there may intervene something to hinder the present benefit of this privilege which is annex to thy Covenant-state: For, though thy state be good, yet thy present frame and behaviour may be naught. Thou

maist, though a child of God, be under fresh guilt and defilement as yet unrepented of. Now in this case, God cannot shut his door upon his own child. Thou hast indeed *jus in re*, but not *aptitudinem ad rem*. As a Saint, thou hast a right to all the promises of the Covenant, and to this, of having Gods ear open to thy prayers among the rest; but as thou art a Saint under guilt, or the defilement of any sin that thou hast not yet repented of, thou art not fit to enjoy what thou hast a right to as a Saint. God doth not disinherit thee indeed, but he sequesters the promise from thee, and the rents of it shall not be paid to thee, till thou renewest thy repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus for the pardon of it. Thy God will chuse a sinner time than this is to signify his love to thee. The Leper under the Law, was to stand off, while purified; and so will thy God turn his back of thy prayer, till thou beest cleansed of thy sin. Again, Suppose thou art a Saint, and hast not thus defiled thy self with any gross sin, yet thy graces might not be exercised in the duty of prayer; haply thou didst pray, but no faith or fervency were exerted in it. There may be grace in the heart, but none in the duty; and such a prayer shall not speed. The promise is to the Saint acting his faith and fervency in prayer, *The fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much, Jam. 5. Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, Jer. 29. 12.* Lastly, Though thou wert stirred up in prayer, yet may be thy heart was not raised up to rely on God after prayer for an answer. Then we pray in faith, when we so take hold of God by faith in prayer, as to wait and stay our selves upon God for a return of mercy from him. Now by putting all these together, thou maist come to the resolution of the question in hand, If thou beest in a Covenant-state, and liest not in any known sin unrepented of; if thou prayest fervently, and actest faith on God, so as to stay thy soul upon God for an answer, though accompanied with many weaknesses and staggerings, truly thou maist without presumption, conclude the mercy which finds thee in this orderly manner waiting upon God, comes as a gracious answer to thy prayer. We do not fear to break open a Letter, when we find our name in the superscription directing it to us. Search the promises, and thou shalt find them directed by name to thee who prayest thus.

CHAP. XXVII.

The first importance of [Praying alwayes] shewn to amount to as much as praying in every thing; and why all our affairs and actions are to be encircled within the Duty of Prayer.

HAVING dispatched the duty of Prayer in general, we now come to give an account of the several branches in the Exhortation; which together make up an excellent Directory to the Christian for his better performing of this duty. Indeed the Apostle here not only teacheth the Christian how to pray, but the Minister also how to preach, in that he doth not pakedly tell them what is their duty (and so leave them

to their own skill in the management of it) but that he may facilitate the duty unto them, he annexeth such directions, and so rules their Copy for them, that they shall not easily miscarry in the performance thereof. That Preacher who presseth a duty (though with never so much zeal) but doth not chalk out the way how it is to be done, is like one that brings a man to a door that is lockt, and bids him go into the house;

house; but gives him no key to open it: Or that sends a company to Sea, but lends them no Chard by which they should steer their course.

But to come to the Directions; they are six.
We shall begin with the first.

First, The time for this duty [*always*] and this hath a threefold importance.

First, To pray always, is as much as if he had said, *Pray in every thing*, according to that of the same *Apostle* in another *Epistle*, *In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God*. Prayer is a Catholic duty, with which like a girdle we are to compass in all our affairs; it is to be as bread and salt on our Table; whatever else we have to our meal, these are not forgot to be set on: Whatever we do, or would have, prayer is necessary, be it small or great: Not as the *Heathen*, who prayed for some things to their gods, and not for other; if poor, they prayed for riches; if sick, for health: but as for the good things of the mind, such as Patience, Contentation, and other virtues, they thought they could carve well enough in these for themselves, without troubling their gods to help them. The Poet it seems was of this mind:

*Hoc satis est orare Jovem qui donat & aufert;
Det vitam, det opes, animum mi aequum ipse parabo.*

O how proud is ignorance! let God give the less, and man will do the greater.

But their folly is not so much to be wondred at, as the irreligion of many among our selves, who profess to know the true God, and have the light of his Word to direct them what worship to give him. Some are so brutish in their knowledge, that they hardly pray to God for any thing, others not for every thing. May be they look upon pardon of sin, and salvation of their souls (as fruit on the top-branches of a Tree) out of the reach of their own arm, and therefore now and then put up some slight prayers to God for them. But as for Temporals, which seem to hang lower, they think they can pluck them by their own industry, without setting up the Ladder of Prayer to come at them. They that should see some, how busie they are in laying their plots, and how seldom in prayer, could not but think they expected their safety from their own policy, and not Gods providence: Or should observe, how hard they work in their shop, and how seldom and lazy they are at prayer for Gods blessing on their labour in their Closet; they must conclude these men promise themselves their estates more from their own labour, than the Divine Bounty. In a word, It is some great occasion that must bring many upon their knees before God in prayer: May be, when they have an extraordinary enterprise in hand, wherein they look for strong opposition or great difficulty; in such a case, God shall have them knocking at his door (for now they are at their wits end, and know not how to turn them) but the more ordinary and common actions of their lives, they think they can master at their pleasures,

and so pass by Gods door without bespeaking his preference or assistance; thus one runs into his shop; and another into the field, and takes no notice that God is concerned in their employments; if to take a long journey by Sea or Land, where eminent dangers and hazards present themselves unto their thoughts, then God hath their company; but if to stay at home, or walk to and fro in their ordinary employments, they bespeak not the providential wing of God to overshadow them, this is not to pray always; if thou wilt therefore be a Christian, do not thus part stakes with God, committing the greater transactions of thy life to him, and trust thyself with the less: but *acknowledge God in all thy ways, and lean not to thine own understanding in any*; by this, thou shalt give him the glory of his universal providence, with which he incircles all his creatures, and all their actions: As nothing is too great to be above his power, so nothing too little to be beneath his care; he is the God of the Valleys, as well as of the Mountains. The sparrow on the hedge, and the hair on our head, are cared for by him; and this is no more derogatory to his glorious Majesty, than it was to make them at first. Nay, thou shalt by this not only give God his glory, but secure thyself, for there is no passage in thy whole life so minute and inconsiderable, which (if God should withdraw his care and providence) might not be an occasion of a sin or danger to thee; and that which exposeth thee to these, calls upon thee to engage God for thy defence: *First*, The least passage in thy life may prove an occasion of sin to thee; At what a little Wicket many times a great sin enters, we daily see. *David's* eye did but casually light on *Bathsheba*, and the good mans foot was presently in the Devils Trap; hast thou not then need to pray, that God would set a guard about thy senses whereever thou goest? and to cry with him, *Keep back mine eyes from beholding vanity*. *Dinah* went but to give her Neighbours, the daughters of the Land, a visit (which was but an ordinary civility) and we may imagine, that she little thought (when she went out) of playing the Strumpet before she came home, yet alas we read how she was deflowered: What need then hast thou before thou goest forth, to charge God with the keeping of thee, that so thou may'st be in his fear from morning till night? *Secondly*, No passage of thy life so small, wherein thou may'st not fall into some great danger; how many have been choakt with their food at their own Table? received their deadly wound by a beam from their own house? Knowest thou, what will be the end of any action when thou beginnest it? *Joseph* was sent by his father to see his brethren in the field, and neither of them thought of a longer journey; yet this proved the sad occasion of his captivity in a strange land: *Job's* servants were destroyed with lightning from heaven, when they were abroad about their Masters business. Where canst thou be safe, if Heavens eye be not on thee? A slip of thy foot as thou walkest, or a trip of thy Horse as thou ridest, may break thy bones, yea thy neck. O! what need then of a God to make thy path plain before thee? It is he that *preserves man and beast*; and canst thou have faith to expect his

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protection,

*protection, when thou hast not a heart to bespeak it | God to take care for thy safety, who carest no more
in thy humble prayers at his hand? What reason hath | for his Honour?

CHAP. XXVIII.

The second importance of [Praying always] to pray in all conditions, prosperity and adversity; and why this duty is so to be perform'd.

Secondly, To pray always, may import as much, as to pray in all conditions; that is, in prosperity, as well as in adversity: So Calvin takes it, *Omni tempore perinde valet, atque tam prosperis quam adversis*. Indeed when God doth afflict, he puts an especial season for prayer into our hands; but when he enlargeth our state, he doth not discharge us of the duty, as if we might then lay it aside (as the Traveller doth his Cloak when the weather is warm.) Prayer is not a Winter-garment: It is then to be worn indeed, but not to be left off in the Summer of Prosperity; if you would find some at prayer, you must stay till it thunders and lightens; not go to them except it be in a storm or tempest. These are like some birds that are never heard to cry or make a noise, but in or against foul weather. This is not to pray always; not to serve God, but to serve our selves of God; to visit God, not as a friend for love of his company, but as a meer beggar for relief of our present necessity; using prayer as that Pope is said to have used Preaching, for a Net to compass in some mercy we want, and when the fish is got, then to throw away the duty. Well Christian, take heed of this; thou hast Arguments enough to keep this duty always on its wheels, let thy condition be what it will.

First, Pray in prosperity, that thou may'st speed when thou prayest in adversity; own God now, that he may acknowledge thee then. Shall that friend be welcome to us, that never gives us a visit, but when he comes to borrow? This is a right beggars trick, but not a friends part.

Secondly, Pray in prosperity to clear thy self, that thou didst not pray in hypocrisie when thou wert afflicted: One prayer now, will be a better evidence for thy sincerity, than a whole bundle of duties perform'd in adversity: Colours are better discerned and distinguished by day-light, than by the Candle in the night. I am sure the truth and plainness of our hearts in duty, will be best discover'd in Prosperity. In affliction even gracious souls have scruples upon their spirits that they seek themselves; smart and pain, they fear, makes them cry till they remember that their acquaintance with God did not begin in their affliction, but that they took delight in his company before these straits drove them to him.

Thirdly, Pray in prosperity, that thou mayst not be insuared by thy prosperity; Ephraim and Manasse were brethren; and so are plenty and forgetfulness (the signification of their name) Prosperity is no friend to the memory, therefore we are cautioned so much to beware when we are full, lest then we forget God, *Magnus vir est, cui praesens felicitas, si arvis non irrisit*. Bern. He is a holy man indeed, whose present prosperity doth not mock and abuse

him, when it smiles most pleasingly on him. O how hard is it to be pleased with it, and not be ensnared by it! Strong drink (Solomon saith) is a mocker; it soon puts him, that is too bold with it, to shame; Prosperity doth the same. A little of it makes us drunk, and then we know not what we do: This hath proved often an hour of temptation to the best of men. You shall find in Scripture, the Saints have got their saddest falls on the evenest ground, Noah (who had seen the whole World drowned in water) no sooner almost was he come safe to shore, but himself is drowned in Wine. Davids heart was fixt in the Wilderness, but his wanton eye rouled and wandred when upon the Terrace of his Palace. Health, Honour, Riches, and Pleasures, with the rest of this worlds enjoyments, they are like luscious Wine, we cannot drink little of them they are so sweet to our carnal palate, and we cannot bear much of them, because they are strong and heady, fuming up in pride and carnal confidence. Now prayer is an excellent preservative against the evil of this state. First, As it spiritualizes our joy into thankfulness; it is carnal joy that is dreggy, and therefore soon putrifies. Now as prayer in affliction refines the Christians sorrow by breathing it forth in holy groans to God, whereby he is kept from sinful complaints of God, and murmurings against him: Thus here the Christian by giving a spiritual vent to his joy in thanksgiving and praises of his God, he is preserved from the degeneracy of carnal joy, that betrays the soul to many foul sins, if it self be not one: For which purpose it is; that the Apostle James cuts out this twofold channel for this double affection to run in: *Is any afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him sing Psalms, Jam. 5*. As if he should say, Let the afflicted soul pray, that he may not murmur: Let the joyous Saint sing Psalms, that his joy turn not sensual. A carnal heart can easily be merry and jocund when he prospers; the Saint alone is praiseful. The Psalmist speaking of the Mariners deliver'd from storms at Sea (which threatned their wrack) saith: *Then they are glad, because they be quiet, Psal. 107. 30*. But this they may be, and yet not thankful: Wherefore he adds his holy option, *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!* Secondly, By prayer the soul is led into the acquaintance of higher delights than are to be found in all his temporal enjoyments, and thereby is taken off from an inordinate valuation of them, because he knows where better are to be had. The true reason why men are puffed up with too high an opinion of worldly felicities, is their ignorance of spiritual. Thirdly, Prayer is Gods Ordinance to sanctifie our creature-comforts, *Every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim. 4. 5*. Now this obtained, the

the Christian may safely drink of these streams; the Unicorn hath now put in his horn to heal them; Satan shall not have such power to corrupt him in the use of them, as another that bespeaks not Gods blessing on them. There is a vanity and statulency in every creature, which if not corrected by prayer, breeds indigested humours in him that feeds on it.

Fourthly, In thy prosperity pray, to shew thy dependency on God for what thou enjoyest: Thou hold'st all thy mercies *in capite*: He that gave thee thy life, holds thy soul in life, *Thou hidst thy face* (saith David) *and I was troubled*. Truly it is time for God to withdraw his hand, when thou goest about to cut off his Title. That enjoyment comes but as a guest, which is not entertained by prayer. Solomon tells us of wings that our temporal mercies have; now if any thing can clip these, and keep them from flying away, it is prayer. God would often have destroyed Israel, but Moses stood in the gap; their mercies were oft upon the wing, but that holy mans prayers stayed their flight. Gods heart would not serve him to come over the back of his prayer, and put that to shame: No, they shall live, but let them say, *Moses's prayer begg'd their life*. Now if the prayer of a holy person could prevail for others, and obtain a new Lease for their lives, that were (many of them) none of the best; surely then the prayer of a Saint may have great power with God for his own. Long life is promised to him that

honours his earthly father; prayer, prayer gives our heavenly Father the greatest honour. If therefore thou wouldst have thy life, or the life of any mercy prolonged, forget not to pay him this tribute. Yea, would you transmit what God hath blest you with to your Posterity? the best way thou canst take, is to lock thy estate up in Gods hand by prayer? What ever Will thou makest, GOD is sure to be thy Executor. Man may propose and purpose, but God disposeth. Engage him, and the care is taken for thy posterity.

Fifthly, Pray now, that thou may'st out-live the loss of thy prosperity. When prayer cannot prevail to keep a temporal mercy alive with thee, yet it will have a powerful influence to keep thy heart alive when that dyes. Oh it is sad, when a mans estate and comfort are buried in the same grave together! None will bear the loss of an enjoyment so patiently, as he that was exercised in prayer while he had it. When Job was in his flourishing estate, his children alive, and all his other enjoyments, then was he a great Trader with God in this duty; *He sanctified his children every day*. He did not bless himself in them, but sought the blessing of God for them; and see how comfortably he bears all, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord*. The more David prayed for his child while alive, the fewer tears he shed for it when it was dead.

CHAP. XXIX.

The third importance of [Praying alwayes] to be as much as praying daily; and why we are to pray daily.

THirdly, To pray alwayes, is to pray daily. When the Christian keeps a constant daily exercise of this duty, Prayer is not a Holy-day, but every-day work: *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thee for ever and ever*, Psal. 145. 2. This was typified by the daily sacrifice, called therefore, *The continual burnt-offering*, Exod. 29. 38. whereby was signified our daily need of seeking mercy at Gods hands through Christ. When our Lord taught his Disciples to pray, he bade them not ask bread for a week, no not for a morrow, but for the present day, *Give us this day our daily bread*: plainly signifying our duty, to seek our bread every day of God; which surely was also the end, why God gave the *Adanna* in such a portion, as should not stuff their Cup-boards, and furnish them with a store for a month or week, but be a just *dimensum*, and sufficient allowance for a day, that so they might be kept in a daily dependance on God, and look up to him daily, who carried the key of their Pantry for them; and have not we the same necessities upon us with them? Our bodies are as weak as theirs, and cannot be preserved without daily repast. Do we not depend on him for the bread of the day, and the rest of the night? And he hath too good an Opinion of his souls constitution, who thinks it can live or thrive with Yesterdays meal, without renewing his commu-

nion with God to day. The Mother would think the sucking Child not well, if it should forsake the breast a whole day: so may'st thou conclude thy soul is not right, that can pass a day without craving any spiritual repast in prayer. If thy wants be not sufficient to keep the Chariot of this duty on its Wheels, yet the sins which thou daily renewest, would drive thee every day to confesse and beg pardon for them. We are under a Law, *Not to let the Sun go down upon our wrath against our brother*: And dare we, who every day deserve Gods wrath, let the Sun go down, before that Controversie is taken up between God and us? In a word, Every day hath its new mercies; *His compassions fail not; they are new every morning*, Lam. 3. 23. These new mercies contract a new debt, and God hath told us the way of payment, *viz.* a tribute of praise: without this, we cannot expect a sanctified use of them. He is branded by all for a prophane person, that eats his meat, and gives not thanks: And it would be thought a ridiculous excuse, should he say, He gave thanks Yesterday, and that should serve for this meal also. We have more mercies every day to bless God for, than what is set on our Tables. We wear mercies, we breath mercies, we walk upon mercies, our whole life is but a passage from one mercy, to be entertained by another. As one cloth is drawn, another is laid for a new Feast

to be set on. Now, doth God every day anoint our head with fresh Oyl, and shall not we Crown him with new praises? I will not enter into a discourse, how oft a Christian should in a day pray: At least it must be twice, *i. e.* morning and night. Prayer must be the key of the morning, and lock of the night. We shew not our selves Christians, if we do not open our eyes with prayer when we rise, and shut them again with the same key when we lye down at night. This answers to the *morning and evening sacrifice* in the Law; which yet was so commanded, as to leave room for those other free-will offerings which their zeal might prompt them to; pray as oft as you please besides, so that your devotions juggle not with the necessary duties of your particular Callings; the oftner, the more welcome. We read of *Dauids seven times a day*; but be sure thou dost not retrench and cut God short of thy stated hours. *It is a good thing* (saith the *Psalmist*) *to give thanks unto the Lord; to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night*, *Psalm* 92. 1, 2. *God is Alpha and Omega*. It is fit we should begin and end the day with his praise, who begins and ends it for us with his mercy. Well Christian, thou seest thy duty plainly laid before thee. As thou wouldst have God prosper thy labour in the day, and sweeten thy rest in the night, clasp them both together with thy morning and evening devotions. He that takes no care to set forth Gods portion of time in the morning, doth not only rob God of his due, but is a Thief to himself all the day after, by losing the blessing which a faithful prayer might bring from Heaven on his undertakings. And he that closeth his eyes at night without prayer, lies down before his bed is made: He is like a foolish Captain in a Garison, who betakes himself to his rest, before he hath set the Watch for the Cities safeguard. God is his Peoples Keeper: but can he expect to be kept by him, that chargeth not the Divine Providence with his keeping? The Angels, at his Command, pitch their Tents about his Saints dwellings. But as the drum calls the Watch together, so God looks that by humble prayer, we should beg of him their Ministry and attendance about us.

I shall shut up this discourse with one Caution to

be observed in your daily exercise of this Duty.

Caution. Beware, that thy constant daily performance of this duty, doth not degenerate into a lifeless formality. What we do commonly, we are prone to be but ordinary and slighty in the doing. He is a rare Christian, that keeps his course in prayer, and yet grows not customary to pray of meer course. The Power of Religion cannot be preserved, without an outward Form and Order observed in its exercises, and yet very hard it is, not to grow formal in those duties which we are daily conversant with. Many that are very neat and nice when their Holy-day suit is on their back, are yet too slovenly in wearing their every-day Apparel. Thus at a Fast, or on a Sabbath, our hearts haply are stirr'd up to some solemnity and spirituality becoming the Duty of Prayer, as being awed with the Sacredness of the time, and extraordinary weight of the Work: But, alas, in our every-day duties we are too slighty and slovenly. Now set thy self, Christian, with all thy might, to keep up the life and vigour of thy spirit in thy daily approaches to God. Be as careful to set an edge on thy Graces before thy prayer, as on thy stomach before thy Meal. Labour to come as hungry to this Duty, as to eat thy Dinner and Supper. Now, no expedient for this, like a holy Watch set about thy heart in the whole course of thy life. He that watcheth his heart all day, is most likely to find it at hand, and in tune for prayer at night: Whereas loose walking breeds lazy praying. Be oft in the day putting thy self in mind what work waits for thee at Night. Thou art to draw near unto thy God; and this will make thee afraid of doing any thing in the day, that will indispose thee or make thee fear a chide from thy God when thou appearest before him. That of the *Apostle* is observable, *1 Pet. 1. 17. If he call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* As if he had said, Do you mean to pray? then look to the whole course of your walking, that it be in the fear of God, or else you will have little heart to go about that work, and as little hope that he will bid you welcome; for he judgeth of persons that pray, not only by their prayers, but by their works and walking.

CHAP. XXX.

Of Ejaculatory Prayer, its nature, excellent use and end.

SEcondly, The second branch in the *Apostles* Directory for Prayer, follows, which hath respect to the kinds of Prayer, that are to be taken into the Christians exercise; As for the season, he must *Pray alwayes*, so for the kinds of Prayer, with *all Prayer and Supplication*. Now there is a double [All] to be observed.

First, *All manner* of Prayer. Secondly, *all matter* of Prayer.

I shall begin with the first, *Modus orandi*, and that falls under several divisions and distinctions.

First, Prayer is *sudden and ejaculatory*, or *composed and fixed*.

Secondly, that which is composed, is either *Solitary*, or *social*, performed joyntly with others.

Thirdly, Social and joynt Prayer, is either *private* in the Family, or *publick* in the Church.

Fourthly, Solitary and Social, private and publick Prayer, are either *ordinary*, or *extraordinary*.

First, *Ejaculatory*, which is nothing else but the lifting up of the Soul to God upon a sudden emergent occasion, with some short (but lively expression)

of

of our desires to him, sometimes it is vocal, sometimes only groaned forth from the secret workings of a gracious heart. These darts may be shot to Heaven without using the tongues bow: Such a kind of Prayer, that of *Moses* was, which rang so loud in Gods ear, that he ask'd *Moses*, *Wherefore cryest thou unto me?* Exod. 14. 15. Whereas we read of never a word that he spake; it was no season for *Moses* then to retire and betake himself to the duty of Prayer, in a composed and settled way, as at other times he was wont, for the enemy was at his back, and the people of *Israel* flocking about him, murmuring and charging him with the guilt of blood, in that he had enticed them out of *Egypt* to fall into such a trap, wherein they expected no other than to lose their lives, either in the Sea, or by the *Egyptians*. This no doubt made *Moses* presently dispatch his desires to Heaven by the hand of some short ejaculation, the surest and quickest Post in the world, which brought him back a speedy and happy return, as you may see, *vers.* 16. Thus *Nehemiah* also upon the occasion of the Kings Speech to him, interposeth a short Prayer to God between the Kings question, and his answer to it, *Nehem.* 2. 4. *Then the King said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of Heaven, and I said to the King, &c.* So soon was this holy man at Heaven and back again (even in a trice) without any breach of manners, in making the King wait for his answer. Sometimes you have the Saints forming their desires into a few smart and passionate words, which fly with a holy force from their lips to Heaven, as an Arrow out of a Bow. Thus old *Jacob* when he was dispatching his Sons back again to *Egypt*, and had with the greatest prudence provided for their Journey (by furnishing them with double money, and a choice present in their hand to appease the Governour of the Land) that now he might engage Heaven on their side, he breaks forth into this ejaculatory Prayer; *God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin*, Gen. 43. 14. And *David*, when intelligence came that *Ahithophel* was of *Absalom's* Counsel, let fly that dart to Heaven, which came down upon his head with a vengeance, *O Lord I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*, 2 Sam. 15. 31. This kind of praying *David* probably might mean, *Psal.* 119. 164. when he saith, *Seven times a day do I praise thee*; not as if he had seven set hours for this duty every day, as the *Papists* would have it to countenance their seven Canonical hours; but rather a definite number is here put for an indefinite, and so amounts to no more than this; he did very often in a day praise God, his holy heart taking the hint of every providence, to carry him to Heaven on this errand of Prayer and Praise.

Now to dispatch this kind of Prayer, I shall only First, Shew, why the Christian beside his stated hours for Prayer (wherein he holds more solemn commerce with God) should also visit God occasionally, and step into his presence ever and anon (what ever he is about) with these ejaculatory breathings of his heart. For this is a kind of Prayer, that needs

not interrupt the Christian, nor break any squares in his other employments. Is he on a Journey? He may go to Heaven in these short Salleys of his soul, and make no less speed in his way for them. Is he in the field at work? His Plough needs not stand still for this; As the Meadow is not the worse for what the *Bee* sucks from its flowers; so neither doth a mans worldly occasions suffer any loss from that spiritual improvement, which a gracious soul thus makes of them.

S E C T. I.

Reason 1. The first Reason may be taken from God, who to shew his great delight in his childrens prayers, lets his door stand always wide open, that when ever we have but a heart, and will be so kind as to step in to visit him with a Prayer at what ceile of the day or night soever it be, we shall be welcom; nay, he doth not only give us a liberty, but layes it as a Law upon us, to let him hear from us as oft as possibly we can, and therefore commands us to *Pray continually*, 1 Thes. 5. And, *what ever we do, in word or deed, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the Father by him.* What do these, and such like places signifie? but that we should take every occasion that his Spirit and providence bring to our hand for the lifting our hearts up to him in Prayer. And can we suppose that a Prayer at our first setting forth in the morning, with never thinking of God any more till we come to our round for Prayer at night again, will pass for a praying continually? When a Father chargeth his Son (that lives abroad) to let him as oft as may be, hear from him; though he doth not expect a long Epistle from him by every Messenger that comes that way, yet looks for some short remembrance of his duty by word of mouth, and it is accepted, till he hath more leisure to write his full mind. God bids pray continually; now he knows we cannot be always on our knees in the solemn performance of this duty; But therefore he expects to hear the oftener from us in these occasional remembrances of him, (hinted to us all along the day by emerging providences) which the Holy Spirit stands ready as our Messenger to convey unto him.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, From the excellent use of ejaculatory Prayer in the Christians whole course of life.

First, They are of excellent use to be set against those sudden injections of Satan, which he will be darting into our minds.

It were strange, if the best of Saints should not find the Devil busie with them in this kind; none so pure whose chastitie of mind this foul Spirit dares not to assault; And when his temptations have once coloured our imagination, it is hard wiping them off before they soak so deep as to leave some malignant tincture on our affections. Now when any such dart from Hell is shot in at thy window, no such way to wind out of the temptation, as to shoot thy darts to Heaven in some holy ejaculation. Our Saviour taught

taught his Disciples the use of this weapon. *Pray that thou enter not into temptation.* Now when thou canst not draw out the long Sword of a solemn Prayer, then go to the short Dagger of ejaculatory Prayer; and with this, if in the hand of Faith, thou mayest stab thy enemy to the heart. He that at one short Prayer of *David* could infatuate *Ahitophel*, an Oracle for policy, can befool the Devil himself, and will at thy Prayer of faith; *The Lord rebuke thee O Satan*, (said Christ) it is time now for Satan to be gone, when Heaven takes the Alarm, as when Thieves are about a house to rob it, and they within beat a Drum, or give a sudden shriek to call in help, presently they flee; And if God for thy tryal should not come at first call to rid thee of these unwelcome guests, yet thy very crying out (if affectionate and cordial) will clear thee from consenting to their villany.

Secondly, They are a Sovereign means to allay the Christians affections to the world, one of the worst enemies he hath in the field against him, for it choaks the Soul, thickens the Christians spirit, and changes his very complexion. Who but dying men smell of the Earth, and carry its colour in their countenance? Grace dyeth apace, where the heart savours much of the Earth. Now prayer, what is it, but the lifting of the soul from Earth to Heaven? Were we oftner in a day sucking in, as it were, fresh air, and new influences of grace from God, our spirits could not be possibly so much poison'd with worldly affections.

When one was askt, Whether he did not admire the goodly structure of a stately House? Answered, No; For (saith he) I have been at *Rome*, where more magnificent Fabricks are to be seen. Thus when Satan presents the Worlds pleasures or treasures to the Christian (that he may inveigle his affections to dote on them) a gracious soul can say, I have been at Heaven, there is not an hour in the day, wherein I enjoy not better than these in communion with my God.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, They keep the Christians heart in a holy disposition for the more solemn performance of this Duty. He that is so Heavenly in his Earthly employments, will be the less Worldly in his Heavenly. It was a sweet Speech of a dying Saint, That he was going to change his place, but not his company. A Christian that is frequent in these ejaculations when he goes to pray more solemnly, he goes not from the world to God, but from God to God: From a transient view of him, to a more fixed; whereas another discontinues his acquaintance with God (after his morning visit) and comes not in his company, till

called in by his customary performance. O! how hard a business will such a one find it to pray with a Heavenly heart! What you fill the vessel with, you must expect to draw thence; if Water be put in, we cannot without a miracle think to draw Wine. What? art thou all day filling thy heart with Earth, (God not in all thy thoughts) and dost thou look to draw Heaven thence at night? If you would have fire for your evening sacrifice, expect not new from Heaven to be dropt, but labour to keep what is already on thine Altar from going out; which thou canst not better do, than by feeding it with this Fuel.

SECT IV.

Fourthly, They are of excellent use to alleviate any great affliction that lies heavy upon soul or body, while others sit disconsolate, grinding their souls, and wasting their spirits with their own anxious thoughts. These are his wings with which he flyeth above his troubles, and in an instant shoots his soul to Heaven, out of the din and noise of his afflictions. How can he be long uncomfortable, who when any thing begins to disquiet him, lets it not lie boaking and belking in his mind (as a thorn in the flesh) but presently gives vent to it, by some Heavenly meditation, or heart-easing prayer to God? Those heavy tydings which came to *Job* one upon the neck of another, it was not possible for him to have stood under their weight, had his thoughts been employed on no other subject than his affliction. But being able to lift up his heart to God; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* This one devout meditation, or ejaculation, gave him incomparable ease. Indeed, in afflictions that are very sharp and violent, it is no time for long discourses; the poor creature cannot hold out in a continued duty of prayer, as at another time. When the fight grows hot, and the Army comes to grapple hand to hand with their enemy, they have not leisure to charge their great Artillery, then their short Swords do them most service. Truly thus 'tis in this case; the poor creature may be finds his body weak, and his spirit oppress'd with temptations, which Satan pours like so much shot upon him, that all he can well do, is to pray quick and short. Now fetch a groan for the pain he feels, and then shoot a Dart to Heaven, to call God in to his help. And blessed is the man, that hath his Quiver full of these Arrows. We see Christ in his Agony, chose to pray oft, rather than long, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: However, not my will, but thine be done.* This short ejaculation he sends to Heaven thrice, with some little pause of time between prayer and prayer; and was heard in that he fear'd, Heb. 5.

CHAP. XXXI.

A Reproof to those that use not this kind of Prayer ; or do it in a prophane manner ; or that use this kind of Prayer, but neglect other.

S E C T. I.

Use 1. **F**OR Reproof of those that are wholly unacquainted with this kind of praying, not such a Dart to be found in all their Quiver. Their heart is as a Bow bent indeed, and their Quiver full of arrows ; but all are shot beside this mark ; the World is their *Butt*, at this they let flie all their thoughts. God is so great a stranger with them, that they hardly speak to, or think of him from morning to night, though they travel all day in his company : And is it not strange, that God, who is so near his creature, should be so far from his thoughts ? Where canst thou be ? Or what can thy eye light upon that may not bring God to thy remembrance, and give thee a fair occasion to lift up thy heart to him ? He is present with thee in every place and company ; thou canst use no creature, enjoy no mercy, feel no affliction, and put thy hand to no work, which will not prompt thee either to beg his counsel, seek his blessing, crave his protection, or give him praise for his gracious providence over thee. The very beast thou ridest on, could it speak, (as once *Balaam's Ass* did) would reprove thy Atheism, who goest plodding on thy way, and takest no notice of Him that preferreth both man and beast. But God speaks once, yea twice, and brutish men perceive it not. Well may *Solomon* say, *The heart of the wicked is little worth, when God is not in all his thoughts.* What can that heart be worth, that is stult with that which is worth nought ? at least which within a while will be so, for in that moment wherein those poor wretches die, all their thoughts perish, and come to nothing. Truly, though ye were so many *Kings* and *Emperors*, yet if the stock of your thoughts be spent all the day long upon earthly projects (never flying so high, as to lead you into communion with God) you are but like those *Vermin*, that are buried alive in some stinking *Dung-hill* ; the food your souls live upon, is low and base, and such must the temper of your souls also needs be. O ! how many are there in the World, whose backs are bravely clad with *Scarlet*, while their souls embrace the *Dung-hill* ? Whose bellies are high-fed, and deliciously pamper'd, but their souls set at course fare ? The body which is the *Beggar*, is mounted on *Horse-back*, and the soul which is the *Prince*, walks on foot, prefer'd to no higher employment, than to hold her slaves stirrup, being made to bestow all its thoughts and care how to provide for that, and allow'd nothing for its self ? yet these must be cried up for the only happy men in the World ; whereas, some poor creatures are to be found (though their outward port and garb in the world renders them despicable) who enjoy more of Heaven and true comfort by the frequent commerce they have with God (as they are at their *Loom* or *Wheel*) in one

day, than the other do in all their lives, for all their pomp and fanciful felicities. What account will such give to God for the expence of their thoughts, the first-born of their souls ? What pity is it, that strangers should devour them ? The highest improvement whereof, is to send them in *Embassies* to Heaven, and to converse with God. He who gave man a countenance erect, to walk, (not creep on all four as some other creatures, with their back upon Heaven, and mouth to the Earth) never intended his soul should stoop so below it self, and lick the dust for its food ; but rather, that it should look up to God, and enjoy her self in enjoying communion with him, that is the Father of spirits. If it be so sad a spectacle to behold a man bowed down through the deformities or infirmities of his body, as to go like a beast on all four, hands and feet ; much more, to see a soul so crippled with ignorance and sensual affections, that it cannot look up from the earth where it lies a roveling, to converse with God its Maker.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, It reproves those who do indeed shoot now and then to heaven some of these darts of ejaculatory prayers ; but in so prophane a way, as makes both God and gracious men to nauseate them. Did you never hear a vile wretch interlace his discourse with a strange medley of Oaths and Prayers ? Rap out an Oath, and then send out a vain prayer in the midst of his carnal discourse ? *God forgive me, God bless us ; God be merciful to us ;* such forms of speech many have got, and they come tumbling out when they do not mind what they say. Now which do you think is like to get first to heaven, their Oaths, or their Prayers ? It is hard to say, whether their swearing or their praying be the worst. What base, and low thoughts have these wretches of the great God, to make so bold with his holy and reverend Name ? which should not be thought or spoken of, without fear and trembling. *The legs of the lame are not equal, so is a Parable in the mouth of fools.* That is, it is uncomely. The Name of God, doth not fit a prophane mouth, the discourse is not equal. One step in Hell, and another in Heaven, is too great a stride at once to be taken. To shoot one dart at God in an Oath, and another to him in a Prayer, what can you make of this but a toying with that which is Sacred ? *Religion and the eye, are too tender to be play'd with.* Such prayers as these, are shot out of the Devils Bow, and are never like to reach heaven, except it be to bring back a curse for him that put them up.

S E C T.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, Reproof to those who content themselves with this kind of prayer; they will now and then cast a transient glance upon God in a short ejaculation; but never set themselves to seek God in a more solemn way; and is this all thou canst afford? No more but to look in at Gods door, and away presently? Dost thou not think that he expects thou shouldst sometimes come to stay longer with him in a more settled communion? It is true, these occasional visits when joyned with the conscionable performance of the other, is an excellent symptom of a heavenly heart, and speaks grace to be very lively where they are frequent: As when a man between his set-meals is so hungry, that he must have something to stay his stomach, and yet when Dinner or Supper come, can feed as heartily as if he had eaten nothing; This shews indeed the man to be healthy and strong; but if a bit, by the by takes away his stomach, that he can eat little or nothing at his ordinary meals, this is not so good a sign. Thus here, if a Christian between his set and solemn seeking of God morning and night, finds an inward hunger upon his spirit so strongly craving communion with God, that he cannot stay till his stated hour for prayer returns, but must ever and anon be refreshing

himself with the beverage of ejaculatory prayer, and then comes sharp set to duty at his ordinary set-time, this speaks grace to be *in statu Athletico*, strong and thriving: but on the contrary, it shews a slighty and naughty spirit, to make these an excuse or plea for the neglect of the other. Thou tastest sure little sweetnesss, and findest little nourishment from these, or else they would excite thy soul to hunger for further communion with God. As soon as *David* opened his eyes in the morning, his heart was falling forth to God, *When I awake, I am still with thee.* And as he walk'd abroad in the day time, every occasion led him into the presence of God.

Seven times a day do I praise thee; that is, often, (as it is said, *The righteous fall seven times in a day.*) But did these short glances of *David's* heart, steal from the more solemn performance of this duty? No, we find, he had his set seasons also, *Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, Ps. 55. 17.* Mr. *Ainsworth* interprets this place of solemn stated prayer, and it seems to have been the practice of the more devout *Jews*, to devote three seasons in a day for that duty. I can no more believe him to be frequent and spiritual in ejaculatory prayer, who neglects the season of solemn prayer, than I can believe, that he keeps every-day in the week a Sabbath, who neglects to keep that one which God hath appointed.

C A A P. XXXII.

An Exhortation to the frequent use of Ejaculatory Prayer, with two or three helps thereunto.

Use 2. **T**O the Saints: Be ye excited to the frequent exercise of this duty. I know you are not altogether strangers to it; (if you answer your name, and be such as you go for) but it is a more intimate and familiar acquaintance with this kind of prayer that I would gladly lead you into; such an Art it is, that were we but skilful Traders in it, we should find a blessed advance in our spiritual estate, and soon have more money in our purse, (grace and comfort I mean in our hearts) than now most Christians can shew; we might, by a spiritual Alchymy, turn all we touch into gold, extract Heaven out of Earth, and make wings of every creature and providence that meet us, to help us in our flight to God: Our whole life would be (what I have read of a holy man) *but one communion-day with Christ.* Then neither friends nor foes, joys nor woes, callings nor recreations, (or whatever else we have in this world to do with) should be able to interrupt our acquaintance with him. Whereas now alas, every thing interposeth, as an opaque body, to hide God and heaven from our eye. We who now walk (like Travellers in some bottom or low swamp) with our thoughts of Heaven so over-top'd by the world, that we hardly get a sight of that glorious City to which we are going from morning to night, (and thereby lose much of the pleasure of our journey) should then have it in a manner always before us, as a joyful prospect in our eye, to solace us in the difficulties of

our pilgrimage, and make us gather up our feet more nimbly in the ways of holiness, when we shall see whither they lead us. We count them pleasantly situated, who live in a climate where the Sun is seldom off their Horizon. Truly none have such a constant light of inward joy and peace shining upon their souls, as those who are familiarly conversant with this duty: They are *in sole positi* (as is said of the *Rhodians*) they stand at the best advantage of any other to have, if not a continual, yet a frequent intercourse with God, from whom both the influences of comfort and grace also do all come. And if those Trees must needs have the fairest and sweetest fruit which stand most in the Sun, then surely they are most likely to excel others both in comfort and grace, who are most with God. Every little that the *Bee* brings to the hive (as she flies in and out, though she stays not long on any flower) adds to the stock. Though the soul makes no long stay with God in this kind of prayer, yet the frequent reiterations thereof conduce much to the encrease of its grace. Light gain, with quick returns, makes a heavy purse. Little showers, often following one upon another, plump the corn, and fill the bushels. So do these short spurts (salles of the soul to Heaven) enrich and encrease grace in the heart exceedingly. Now if thou shouldst ask, how thou may'st make this kind of ejaculatory prayer more familiar unto thee, take these few words of counsel.

First,

First, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, (thy affections I mean:) the very reason why we fall out so seldom toward God in these occasional prayers, is, because the weight of our affections poises us another way. The bowl runs as its bias inclines, the stream flows as the Fountain empties it self. If our affections be carnal, to earth we go, and God hath little of our company. *Adam* (it is said) *begat a son in his own likeness*, Gen. 5. 3. and so doth the heart of every man. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the Heavenly, such they also that be Heavenly. Labour therefore to get and keep thy heart heavenly, especially look to these three affections, thy Love, Fear, and Joy.

First, Thy Love: If this fire burn clear, the more of these sparks will from it mount up to God. Love is a great friend to memory. The Adulterer is said to have his eyes full of the harlot; and holy love will be as mindful of God. Such a soul will be often setting God in its view, *I have set the Lord always before me*, Psal. 16. 8. And by often thinking of God, the heart will be enticed into desires after him, *Isa. 26. 8. The desire of our soul is to thy Name, and remembrance of thee*; and see what follows, *vers. 9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early*. Love sets the soul on musing, and musing on praying. Meditation is prayer in Bullion, prayer in the Ore, soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain; the piece charged soon goes off, when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is in *proxima potentia* to prayer. *While I was musing* (saith David) *the fire burned, and I spake with my tongue*. Lord make me know my end, Psal. 39. This was an ejaculatory prayer, shot from his soul, when in the company of the wicked.

Secondly, Thy Fear. Even wicked men, though they be great strangers to prayer, yet we shall hear them knocking at Gods door in a fright; much more will a holy fear direct the Christian, upon all occasions, to lift up his heart to God. Art thou in thy calling? fear a snare therein, and this will excite thee oft in a day to bespeak counsel of God, how to behave thy self therein. Art thou in company? fear lest thou shouldest do, or receive hurt, and thou wilt be lifting up thy heart to him that can only keep thee from both. We cannot have a more faithful Monitor to mind us of this duty than a holy fear. *They that feared the Lord thought upon his Name, Mal. 3. At what time I am afraid* (saith David) *I will trust in thee*.

Fear makes us think where our safety lies, and leads us to our refuge. Had not *Noah* feared a storm, the Ark had not been built. Men fear no sin nor danger, and therefore God hears not of them all the day long. The ungodly world, who walk with their back upon Heaven, and look not up to God from morning to night, we may tell the reason, *The fear of God is not before their eyes*.

Thirdly, Thy Joy and Delight in God: O cherish this. As fear disposeth to pray, so joy to praise. Now, and not till now, the instrument of thy heart is in tune. One hint now from the providence of God, and touch from his Spirit, will set such a soul on work

to bless God. Carnal men, when they are frolick, and upon the merry pin, then they have their catches and songs, as they fit in their house, or ride on the way: How much more will the gracious soul, that walks in the sense of Gods love, be often striking up his harp in holy praises to God? *Psal. 63. 3. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Vers. 4. I will bless thee while I live*. And again, *vers. 5. My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*. See how he goes over and over again the same note. Joy can no more be hid than ointment; as that bewrayeth it self by its hot and sweet perfumes, so doth holy Joy make its own report in the praises it sounds forth to God. It behoves thee therefore, Christian, to be as chary and choice of thy joy, as thou wouldst be of thy blood in thy veins, for in this runs the spirits of praise and thanksgiving. Now would you nourish your joy? do it by sucking the promises, those breasts of consolation; these are a food of pure juice, and strong nourishment, they soon turn into blood, (joy and peace I mean) and with this a spirit of praise must needs grow also.

Secondly, Possess thy heart with strong apprehensions of Gods over-ruling providence in all thy enterprises, great or small. That he that doth what pleaseth him in Heaven and Earth, so that all thy labour and toil in any business is in vain, while this main wheel begins to stir; his providence gives countenance to the Action. O how would this raise thy heart up to God, and send thee with many an errand into his presence. Suppose a man was going about some important business, and had him in his company that alone could help or hinder the dispatch of it; were it not strange that he should travel all day with him, and not apply himself to this person to make him his friend? This is thy very case (Christian) thou and all thy affairs are at the absolute disposal of the great God, to bless or blast thee in every enterprise; if thou hast not his vote, thy business is stopt in the head. Now this God is always in thy company, whether at home or abroad, in thy bed, or at thy board. Surely didst thou believe this firmly, thou wouldst oft in a day turn thy self to him, and beg his good will to favour thy undertaking, and facilitate thy business for thee.

Thirdly, Look thou comliest with the motions of the holy spirit. The Christian shall find him as his Remembrancer to mind him of the more solemn performance of this duty of prayer, so his Monitor to suggest many occasional Meditations to his thoughts, (even amidst worldly employments) as a hint, that now it is a fit time to give God a visit in some holy ejaculation (by thus setting the door (as it were) open for him into Gods presence) sometimes he will be recalling a truth thou hast read or heard, a mercy thou hast received, or a sin thou hast committed; and what means he by all these? but to do thee a friendly office, that by these (thy affections being stirred) thou maist be invited to dart thy soul up to God in some ejaculation suitable to his motion. Now take the hint he gives, and thou shalt have more of his company and help in this kind. For as the evil spirit, where he finds welcome to his wicked suggestions,

sions, grows bold to knock oftner at that door, because it is so soon opened to him; so the holy Spirit is invited, where his motions are kindly entertained, to be more frequent in these his kind approaches, whereas thy neglect of them may cause him to with-

draw, and leave thee to thy own slothful spirit. When Christ had thrice made an attempt to awake his drowsie Disciples, by calling them up to watch and pray, and they fell to nodding again, truly then he bids them *sleep on*.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of Secret or Closet-prayer, that it is a duty incumbent on us, and why?

SECONDLY, The second kind of Prayer is that which we called *composed*, because the Christian composeth himself more solemnly to the work, by setting some considerable time apart from his other occasions, for his more free, and full communion with God in prayer. Now this is either *secret*, or *performed joyntly with others*.

We begin with the first of these, *Secret Prayer*. When the Christian retireth into some secret place, free from all company, and there pours out his soul into the bosom of God, none being witness to this trade he drives with Heaven, but God and himself. I shall here, *first*, prove this to be a duty incumbent upon us; and *secondly*, give the reasons why.

SECT. I.

First. That it is the Christians duty, secretly and solitarily, to hold intercourse with God in prayer, I believe will be granted of more than practise it; even those that are strangers to the performance thereof, carry in their own bosom that which will accuse them for their neglect, except by long looking on the light, and rebelling against the same, their foolish minds be darkned, and have lost all sight and sense of a Deity. If any prayer be a duty, then secret prayer must needs be one. This is to all the other, as the *carina* or keel is to the ship, it bears up all the rest. If we look into the practice of Scripture-Saints, we shall find them all to have been great dealers with God in this trade of secret prayer: *Abraham* had his *Grove*, whither he retired to call upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, *Gen. 21. 33*. We meet *Isaac* walking out into the field to seek some secret place, where he might more freely, with deep meditation, compose himself for this work, *Gen. 24. 63*. Neither was *Rebekah* a stranger to this duty, who upon the Babes struggling in her womb, went to enquire of the Lord, *Gen. 25. 22*. which, saith *Calvin*, was to pray in secret. *Jacob* is famous for his wrestling (as it were hand to hand) with God in the night. Holy *David's* life was little else, he gave himself to prayer, *Psal. 109. 4*. allow but some time spent by him for natures refection, and the necessary occasions of his publick employment, (which yet came in but as a Parenthesis) and you shall find most of the rest laid out in meditation and prayer, as appears, *Psal. 119*. We have *Elias* at prayer under the *Juniper-tree*, *Peter* on the *Leads*, *Cornelius* in a corner of his house; yea, our blessed Saviour (whose soul could have fasted longest without any inward impair, through the want of this repast) yet none more fre-

quent in it; early in the morning he is praying alone, *Mar. 1. 35*. and late in the evening, *Mar. 14. 23*. and this was his usual practice as may be gathered from *Luke 22. 39*. compared with *Luke 21. 37*. Thus Christ sanctified this duty by his own example; yea, we have a sweet promise to the due performance of it, and God doth not use to promise a reward for that work, which he commandeth us not to do, *Mar. 6. 6*. But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Where our Saviour takes it for granted, that every child of God will be often praying to his Heavenly Father, and therefore he rather encourageth them in the work he seeth them about, than commands them to it. When you pray, as if he had said, I know you cannot live without prayer, now when you would give God a visit, enter into thy closet, &c.

SECT. II.

But why must the Christian maintain this secret intercourse with God?

First, In regard of God; he hath an eye to see our secret tears, and an ear to hear our secret groans, therefore we ought to pour them out to him in secret. It is a piece of gross superstition to bind this only to place or company: *I will* (saith the Apostle) *that men pray every where, lifting up pure hands, &c. 1 Tim. 2. 8*. God is every where to be found, at Church, and at home, with our family, and in our closet; and therefore we are to pray every where. Oh! what a comfort is it to a gracious soul, that he can never be out of Gods sight or hearing where ever he is thrown, and therefore never out of his care? for it is out of sight out of mind. This comforted holy *David*, his friends, and kinsmen, they, alas! were afar off, he might lie upon his sick bed, and cry till his heart ached, and not make them hear; but see how he pacifies himself in this his solitude, *Lord, my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee, Psal. 38*. Little thought *Jacob* that he had a son prisoner in *Egypt*, laden there with Irons, that entered into his soul; but he had a God that was nigh unto him all the time of his distress, and heard the cry of the poor prisoner, though his earthly father never dreamt of any such matter.

Great and rich are the returns which in Scripture we find to be sent from Heaven, upon the solitary adventure of the Saints in this bottom. This poor man cried (said *David*) and the Lord saved him out of all his

his troubles, *Psal. 34. 6.* as if he had said, Haply you are afraid to be so bold as to go alone and visit God in secret; Though you dare venture to joyn with others in prayer, and hope to find welcome when you go with such good company, yet you are ready to say, Will God look upon me, or my single prayer? Yes, Behold me, saith *David*, who am newly come from his door, where I lay praying in as poor a condition and as sad a plight, as ever beggar was at mans: A poor exile, in the midst of enemies that thirsted for my blood; yet I (and that when I betrayed so much dastardly unbelief, as to scrabble on the wall like a mad man) cried, and God heard. Who then need be afraid either from his outward straits or inward infirmities (if sincere) to go with a humble boldness unto God? Nay further, as God hath a pitiful eye to see when we pray in secret, so also an angry eye that sees when we do not. I have read of a Prince that would in the evening walk abroad in a disguise, and listen under his subjects windows, whether they talked of him, and what they said; to be sure Gods eye and ear watcheth us, *The Lord hearkned, and heard it, Mal. 3. 16.* And he that hath a book of remembrance for his Saints that fear him, and think upon his Name, hath also a black Bill for their names who shut him out of their hearts and closets. *The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the child en of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.* Though his seat be in Heaven, yet his eye is on Earth; and what doth he observe but whether men understand and seek God?

Secondly, In regard of our selves, the more to prove our sincerity. I do not say that to pray in secret amounts to an infallible character of sincerity, for hypocrisie may creep into our closet (when the door is shut closest) as the Frogs did into *Pharaoh's* bed-chamber; yet this is not the hypocrites ordinary walk: and though his heart may be naught that frequently performs secret duty, yet to be sure his heart cannot be good whose devotion is all spent before men, and is a meer stranger to secret communion with God: or else our Saviour in drawing the hypocrites picture would not have made this to be the very cast of his countenance, *Mat. 6. 5. When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, &c. But when thou prayest enter into thy closet.* The command sends

us as well to the closet as to the Church, and he is a hypocrite that chuseth one, and neglects the other; for thereby it appears he makes conscience of neither; he likes that which may gain him the name of Religious in the opinion of men, and therefore puts on a religious habit abroad, but in the mean time lives like an Atheist at home. Such a one may for a time be the worlds Saint, but God will at last uncase him, and present him before the eyes of all the world for a hypocrite. The true lover delights to visit his friend, when he may find him alone, and enjoy privacy with him; and I have read of a devout person, who when the set time for his private devotions were come, would, whatever company he was in, break from them, with this handsome speech, *I have a friend that stays for me, farewell.* It is worth parting with our best friends on Earth to enjoy communion with the God of Heaven. One called his friends *Thieves*, because they stole Time from him. None worse thieves than they who rob us of our praying seasons.

Thirdly, In regard of the duty it self, and the influence which the holy management of it would have upon the Christians life. This duty is a main pillar to uphold the whole frame of our spiritual building; without this, the Christians house (as *Solomon* saith of the sluggards) will drop out at the windows. That which is most necessary to keep the house standing is under ground, (I mean the foundation) that which keeps the man alive is the heart in his breast, that is unseen. Cease your secret communion, and you undermine your house, you stab godliness to the heart. If the Tree grow not in the root, it will ere long wither in the branch. He that declines this way, can be a gainer in no other; how zealous soever he may appear, all without this is but a distempered heat, (as when the outward parts burn, but the inward chill) such a one may pray to the quickning and comfort of others, but he will get little of either himself. The truth is, this is the first step toward Apostasie; backsliders grow first out of acquaintance with God in secret, their delight in this duty declines by little and little, then are they less frequent in their visits, upon which follows a casting off the duty quite; and yet they may appear great sticklers and zealots in public Ordinances: but if they recover not what they have lost in their secret trade, they will ere long break here also.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Wherein is shewn the low stoop of the Divine Majesty, to hold communion with a single Saint in his closet prayer; as also how they bring their grace into question who live in the total neglect of this kind of prayer.

Use. 1. **L**et us here admire the condescending love of God, in stooping to hold any communion with his poor creatures, while they are clad with rags of mortality, and those besmeared also with many sinful pollutions. Is it not enough that in Heaven, when we shall put on our robes of glory, (befitting the attendance of so great a King) that then he will take us into his Royal Presence, and give us

places with those that stand about him? but will he even now, while our garments smell of the prison, and before our grave-clothes be quite thrown off, admit us to so near an accession? What manner of love is this, that we should now be called the children of God, and as such have liberty to speak our gibberish and broken language, and that with delight to him, who continually hath the praises of blessed An-

gels and glorified Saints sounding in his ears? Nay yet more, this liberty to be indulged us, not only when we come together, and make up a quire in our publick worship, but in our solitary and secret addresses; that a poor creature, when ever himself hath but a heart to step aside, and give God a visit in any corner of his house, should find the arms of so great a Majesty open to embrace him; this is so stupendous, that we may better admire than express it. Should we see a poor beggar speaking familiarly with a great King, who while all his Courtiers stand bare before him, takes him into his embraces, and lets him familiarly whisper in his ear; might it not draw forth our wonderment at such an act of grace from Majesty to beggary? This is the glorious privilege of every Saint on earth, who when he prays, hath liberty to come up to the Throne of God, surrounded with glorious Angels, and into his bosom to pour out his soul as freely, as the child may speak to his indulgent father. O thank our good friend and brother, the Lord Jesus Christ for this; it is he that brings us into the presence of God, and sets us before his face, as *Joseph* his brethren before *Pharaoh*. Whose face need a Saint fear to look upon, that may thus boldly speak to God? Comfort thy self with this, Christian, when thou goest with thy Petition to any great man on earth, and he will not be seen of thee, or such a rich kinsman, and he will not own thee; turn thy back of them both, and go to thy God, he will look on thee, and in his Son own thee for his child; thou hast his ear that can command their heart and purse too. *Jacob's* prayer altered his brothers purposes, that he who meant to kill him, falls on his neck to kiss him. *Nehemiah* had a boon to beg of the *Persian King*, and he goes (a carnal heart would think) the farthest way about to obtain it; he knocks first at Heaven door, *Prosper*,

I pray thee, thy Servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man, *Nehem. 1. 11.* and now to Court he goes, where, behold, he finds the door open before he knocks, for the *King said unto him, For what dost thou make request?* Chap. 2. 4. We may (you see) open two doors with this one key; at the prayer of this holy man, God and man both give their gracious answer. The Christian surely cannot long be in want, if he can but pray: As one said, the *Pope* could never want money so long as he could hold a pen in his hand. It is but praying in faith, and the thing is done which the Christian would have: *Be careful for nothing, but let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God shall keep your hearts, &c. Phil. 4. Commit thy way to the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass, Psal. 37.* The Saints bills are received at first sight, whatever the sum is, Christ is our undertaker to see it paid, and his credit holds still in his Fathers bosom, and will, to procure welcome for all his Saints, even to the least and last of them that shall be found on earth.

Secondly, This blots their names from among the number of Saints, that were never acquainted with this duty. What! a Saint! and content with what thou hast of God in joynt communion with others at Church or family, so as never to desire any privacy between God and thy self? Canst find no errand to invite thee to speak with God alone? thou bringest thy Saintship into question. When a Prince passeth by in the street, then all (even strangers themselves) will come in a throng to see him; but his child thinks not this enough, but goes home with him, must live with him, and be under his eye daily. Hypocrites and prophane ones will crowd into publick Ordnaances, but a gracious soul cannot live without more retired converse with him.

CHAP. XXXV.

An Exhortation to the Saints to hold up their acquaintance with God in secret prayer, and some directions as to their management of it.

Thirdly, Be exhorted, O ye Saints, to hold up your secret acquaintance with God. *I am persuaded (as Paul said to Festus in another case) that none of these things which I have spoken, concerning this duty, are hid from thee, if a Saint. Believest thou that this is thy duty? I know that thou believest. Dost thou pray in secret? I dare not question it, the Spirit of Christ which is in thee will not suffer thee to be wholly a stranger from it. But I would provoke thee to be more abounding therein: These things have I written (saith John) unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God, 1 Joh. 5. 13. that is, that you may believe more; and these things do I now write to you, that call upon the Name of God in secret, that you may call often; and this you need, except you lived further from Satans quarters than the rest of your brethren do, no duty more opposed by Satan or our own slothful hearts*

than this: The Devil can allow you your Church-prayers, your family-duties, and now and then a formal one in your closet too, and yet make his market of you. Therefore take along with you these three or four directions for your better managing thereof.

First, Let it be your constant trade. Rowling stones get no moss; unstable and unconstant hearts will never excel in this or any other duty. The spirit of prayer is a grace infused, but advanced to further degrees by daily exercise. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence. We go boldly into his house whom we often visit.

Secondly, Let it be true secret prayer, and not have its name for nought, take heed no noise be heard abroad of what thou dost in secret. *Enter into thy closet (said Christ) and when thou hast shut thy door, pray: Be sure thou shuttest it so close that no wind*

wind of vain glorie comes in ; rather than there should, shut the door of thy lips as well as of thy closet ; God can hear, though thy mouth delivers not the message. It is true, when *Daniel* prayed, he opened his window, but it was to shew his faith, not his pride, that he might let the world know how little he feared their wrath, not that he coveted their praise. God curiously observes which way thy eye turns, and it is a dishonour he will not bear, that thou should'st be pensioner to the world in expecting thy reward from man, and not himself. Lose not Gods Eye for mans Plaudite, this is to change heaven for earth, and that is a bad bargain.

Thirdly, Be free and open, come not to God in secret, and then keep thy secrets from him ; speak thy very heart, and hide nothing from him : to be reserved and close is against the Law of Friendship. *I have called you friends* (saith Christ ;) *for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Is Christ so open-hearted, not to conceal any thing he knows for our good ? and would'st thou have any secret box in thy Cabinet, that He (if thou could'st help it) should not see ? Art thou confessing sins ? strip thy soul naked, and shuffle not with God ; if thou dost, it speaks one of these two things, That thou hast some secret design of sin for the future, or harbourest an ill opinion of God in thy breast concerning thy past sins, as if he would not be faithful to forgive what thou art free to confess : Like some prodigal child, who though his father promiseth to pay all his debts, and forgive him also ; yet because the sum is vast, dares not trust his father with the whole truth, but conceals some in his confession. The first of these is not the spot of Gods children, but into the latter they sometimes fall, and for awhile may be held by Satans policie, and their own unbelief. But consider (Christian) whatever thy sin is, and how great soever, yet the way to obtain pardon is by confessing, not concealing it ; neither is it concealed from God though thou confess it not. But God likes a confession out of thy own mouth so well, that as soon as thou dost lay open thy own shame, he hath obliged himself faithfully to cover it with the mantle of pardoning mercy, *1 Joh. 1. 9. If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.* Again, art thou making thy request to God ? carry no burden away upon thy spirit through a foolish modesty and fear of troubling God too much or asking too deep, so long as the Promise is on thy

side. Christ never complain'd that his Saints open'd their mouths, or enlarged their desires too wide in prayer ; nay, he bids his Disciples open them wider and tells them, *They had ask'd nothing* ; that is nothing proportionable to the large heart in his breast to give.

Fourthly, It must be seasonable, this gives every thing its beauty. First, Take heed that it doth not juggle with publick worship ; the Devil takes great pleasure in setting the Ordinances of God at variance one against another : Some he perswades to cry up publick prayer, and neglect secret ; and others he would fain bring out of love with the publick, by applauding the other ; whereas there is room enough for both in thy Christian course. *Moses*, though he killed the *Egyptians*, yet the two *Israelites* when scuffling together, he labour'd to reconcile. Beware of giving Satan such an advantage, as to neglect the communion of Saints in the publick, under a pretence of praying in thy closet ; this is to set one Ordinance to fight with another ; they are sister Ordinances, set them not at variance. Deny thy presence in the publick, and thou art sure to lose Gods presence in thy closet. *Prov. 28. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayer shall be an abomination.* Secondly, Look that it interferes not with thy duty in thy particular calling. As thou art to shut thy closet door to pray, so to open thy shop-windows for following thy calling in the world. Go into thy closet before thy shop, or else thou art an Atheist ; but when thou hast been with God there, attend thy shop and calling, or else thou art an hypocrite. Thou consistest of soul and body, God divides thy employment between both ; he that is not diligent in the duty he owes God concerning both, is conscientious in neither. When every part in the body hath its due nourishment distributed to it, health is preserved. So here, he is the sound Christian that divides his care wisely for his spiritual state, and temporal also. Sleep not away thy time for prayer in the morning, and then think thou art sufficiently excused for omitting it, because thy worldly business calls thee another way. Jade not thy body with over-labouring, nor over-charge thy mind with too heavy a load of worldly cares in the day, and then think that the weariness of the one, and discomposure of the other, will discharge thee from praying again at night ; this is to make a sin thy apology for neglecting a duty.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Of Family prayer, wherein is proved, That it is the duty of those that have the charge of a Family, to set up the worship of God in it.

The second kind of composed prayer is that which is performed in joynr communion with others ; and this is double, either *Private* or *publick*, *Family prayer*, or *Church-prayer*. I begin with the first, *Family prayer*.

By a family I mean a society of certain persons, in mutual relation each to other, natural or civil, who

live together under the domestick government of Husband, Master, or Parent. Where ever such a family is found, it is the duty of the Governor of it to set up the Worship of God there, and this part of worship in particular, Prayer in his family. The Jews had their *Family-sacrifice*, *Exod. 12. 21.* which the Master of the house performed at home with his family. There

still remains a spiritual sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, which every Master of a family is with his household to offer up to God. The private house is the Christians *Chapel of ease*, to worship God in daily with his company. The Church began in a family, and it is upheld still by the piety of private families: If the Nursery be not preserved, the Orchard must needs in time decay.

Quest. But the question will be, How can it be proved that family-prayer is a duty?

Ans. I hope none will require an express place of Scripture commanding this *in terminis*, or else not believe it a Duty incumbent upon them. This were the way not only to lose this part of Gods Worship, but other duties also. It will trouble us to find an express word commanding us *in totidem verbis*, or in plain terms to keep the Christian Sabbath, or to baptize our infant children, yet God forbid we should (with some) shake off these Ordinances upon this account. That which by necessary consequence can be deduced from Scripture, is Scripture, as well as that which is laid down in express terms. And if this will content you (which I am sure should) I will hope to give you some satisfaction.

SECT. I.

First, That general command for prayer, will bring this of family-prayer within the compass of our duty, 1 Tim. 2. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where*, If every where, then surely (saith Mr. Perkins upon this place) in our families, where God hath set us in so near relation to one another. Paul salutes the Church in Aquila and Priscilla's house, Rom. 16. 5. And were they not a strange Church who live together without praying together? had they deserved so high and honourable a name, if they had thus shut God out of doors? This were to call them a Church as a Grove is called *Lucus à non lucendo*. The Jews, when they built any of them a new house to dwell in, they were to dedicate it, Deut. 20. 5. and the manner of dedicating their new-built houses was with prayer, as you may see by the Title of the thirtieth Psalm, penn'd on this occasion, *A Psalm and song at the dedication of Davids house*. This they did, first to express their thankfulness to God, who had given them an habitation: Indeed it is no small mercy to have a settled place for our abode, a convenient house for our selves and relations peaceably to dwell in, it is more than those precious Saints had, Heb. 11. 38. *who wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*: yea, than Christ himself had, Matth. 8. 20. *The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*. Secondly, By this they were admonished to acknowledge themselves tenants to God, and that they held their houses of him their great Land-lord upon condition of doing him homage, by making their houses as so many Sanctuaries for his worship while they lived in them. So *Molernus* upon the place.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The trust which Governors of Families are charged with, will evince it is their duty to set up prayer in their Families. Every Master of a family hath *curam animarum*, he hath the care of souls upon him as well as the Minister; he is Prophet, King, and Priest in his own house, and from every of these will appear this his duty. First, He is a Prophet to teach and instruct his family. Wives are bid to learn at home of their Husbands, 1 Cor. 14. then sure they are to teach them at home. Parents are commanded to instruct their children, Deut. 11. 19. *Ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house*. And Ephes. 6. *To bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Now there is a teaching and admonition by prayer to God, and praising of God, as well as in catechising of them Col. 3. 16. *Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns*. The Masters praying with his family, will teach them how to pray when by themselves: The confessions he makes, petitions he puts up, and mercies he acknowledgeth in his family-duty, are an excellent means to furnish them with matter for their devotion. How comes it to pass that many servants and children, when they come to be themselves heads of families, are so unable to be their relations mouth to God in prayer? but because they have in their minority lived in prayer-less families, and were kept in ignorance of this duty, whereby they have neither head nor heart, knowledge or affections suitable for such a work. Again, He is a King in his house, to rule his family in the fear of God: As the Political Magistrates duty is to set up the true worship of God in his Kingdom, so he is to do it in his house; he is to say with *Joshua*, *I and my house we will serve the Lord*. Were it a sin in a Prince, though he served God himself in his Palace, if yet he did not set up the publick worship of God in his Kingdom? surely then it is a sin in the governour of a family, not to set it up in his house, though he prays himself in his closet. Lastly, He is a Priest in his own house, and where there is a Priest there must be a sacrifice; and what sacrifice among Christians but the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving? Thus *David*, we find, went from publick Ordinances to perform private dutie with his family, 2 Sam. 6. 20. *Then David returned to bless his household*, that is, saith one upon the place, he returned to worship God in private with them, and to crave a blessing from God upon them. And this hints a third particular.

SECT. III.

Ans. Thirdly, The practice of Saints in all ages hath been to have a religious care of their families. Good *Joshua* promised for himself and his house, that they would serve the Lord. If he meant the inward worship of God, he promised more than he was able to perform in regard of his family, for he could not thrust grace into their hearts: We must therefore understand him, that it should not be his fault if they did

did not, for he would use all means in his power to make them do so, he would set them a holy copie in his own example, and he would take care that they should not live without the worship of God in his familie. We find *Elisha* praying with his servants, 2 *King.* 4. 33. Master and man together. *Queen Esther* and her *Maid*s keeping a private fast in her familie, *Esther* 4. 16. now it were uncharitable to think, that she was a stranger to the ordinarie exercise of this duty, who was so forward to perform the extraordinary, and put others also upon it: Surely this gracious woman did not begin her acquaintance with this dutie now, and take it up only at a dead lift in her present streight. That were a gluttonous fast indeed, that should devour the worship of God in her familie for all the year after. Cor-

nelius his familie-religion is upon record, *Act.* 10. 2. *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* Mark, he was a devout man, and feared God with all his house: Fear is oft put for the worship of God. God is called the fear of *Isaac*, *Gen.* 30. 53. that is, the God whom *Isaac* worshipped. 2 *King.* 17. 36. *Him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship. Neither shall ye fear other Gods,* vers. 37. that is, ye shall not worihip or pray unto them. Thus we may conceive *Cornelius* was a devout man, and feared God with his house. Surely he that was so merciful to the poor at his door, to refresh their pinched bowels with his alms, could not be so cruel to his relations souls within his house; as to lock up his Religion in a closet from them:

C H A P. XXXVII.

Three Objections against setting up this Duty in Families, answered.

Quest. BUT what necessitie is there, that a familie must meet joyntly to worship God together? will it not serve if every one prays for himself in his closet?

Ans. A Familie is a collective bodie, as such, it owes a worship to God: It is he that setteth the *solitary in families*, *Psal.* 68. 6. and as their Founder, will be vouched by them, *Pour out thy furie upon the families that call not on thy name*, *Jer.* 10. 23. It holds in domestick families as well as National, for he rears up the one as well as the other. There are familie sins, and these are to be confes'd by the familie, as National sins by the Nation. There are familie wants, and they require the joynt supplications of the familie. There are familie occasions and employments, and those call for the united force of the familie, to pull down a blessing upon their joynt labours for the good of the whole societie. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* And is it not fit that they who joyn in the work, should joyn in prayer for a blessing on their endeavour? There are familie mercies that the whole societie share in; and is it not meet, that they which eat of the same feast, should joyn in the same song of praise to the founder of it? In a word, there are judgements that may wrap up the whole familie, and where all are concern'd in the danger, all should lend their help to prevent it; and many hands make light work. A rope twisted of many cords is stronger, than those very cords would be if single; and so the prayer of many together more prevalent, because likely to be more fervent, than of the same persons severally employed in their closets, (though I would not learn one to juttle with the other, there is room for both, why should they fall out?) *Polanus* in his *Synag. de Terra motu* tells us of a Town in the Territory of *Bern* in Switzerland, consisting of ninety houses, that was in the year 1584 destroyed by an Earth-quake, except the half of one house, where the Master of the familie was earnestly pray-

ing with his wife and children upon their bended knees to God.

Obje. O but I have not abilities and gifts for such a work, and better left undone than spoiled in the doing.

Ans. No more hadst thou skill and abilitie for thy trade when thou wentest first to be an Apprentice. Apply thy mind to the work, bind the duty upon thy conscience, search the Scripture, where matter for Prayer is laid up, and rules how to perform the duty. Study thy heart, and observe the state of thy familie, till the sense of the sins, wants, and daily mercies thereof (which thou hast lodg'd in thy memorie) be left warm upon thy spirit. In a word, exercise thy self frequently in secret prayer, be earnest there for his Spirit to enable thee in thy familie service, and take heed of driving the holy Spirit from thee, whose assistance thou prayest for, by sloth, worldliness, pride, or any other course of wickedness. Then, up and be doing, and thou may'st comfortably expect God will be with thee, both to assist and accept thee in the work. *Moses* was sick of his employment that God called him to, and fain would have put it off with this mannerly excuse, *I am not eloquent, but am of a slow speech.* But this objection was soon answered; *And the Lord said unto Moses, Who makes the dumb to speak? who hath made mans mouth? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*, *Exod.* 4. 11. His call was extraordinary, and his assistance was such. Thy call to this duty (as the head of a familie) is ordinary and so may'st look for ordinary assistance; haply thou shalt never have an ability (to such a degree) with a flow of words to exprefs thy self as some others: But let not that discourage thee, God looks not at the pomp of words, and variety of expressions, but sincerity and devotion of the heart. The key opens not the door because gilt, but because fitted to the wards of the lock. Let but the matter of thy prayer

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prayer be according to Gods mind, holy and warrantable, and the temper of thy heart humble and fervent, and no fear but thou shalt speed. Yea, let the prayer be old, pray to day what thou didst yesterday, be but sure to bring new affections with thy old prayer, and thou shalt be friendly received into Gods presence, though thou canst not on a sudden put thy requests into a new shape. God will not shut his child out of doors, because he comes not every day in a new-fashioned suit.

Object. Others there are who object not their own weakness, as the reason of their not praying in their families, but the wickedness of others in their family. They are confident enough of their own gifts, but question others grace, and whether they may pray with such.

Answer. Thirdly, I will grant there are such in thy family, but is this a ground to lay aside the worship of God? Little thinkest thou whither this principle will lead; by this principle the worship of God should not only be laid aside in most private houses, but in all our publick Congregations also. If thou maist not pray in thy family, because a wicked person is present, then not joyn in prayer with any publick Congregation: because thou canst never be assured that they are all godly; nor must the Minister pray there, for fear some wicked ones should be in the company; and so this part of divine worship must be thrown out of the Church, till we can find an Assembly made up of all true Saints; and where such a one ever was, or will be on this side Heaven,

none I think is able to tell. Surely the Saints in Scripture were not thus scrupulous. How oft did Christ himself pray with his Disciples, though a Judas was among them? I have elsewhere clearly I think proved, it is the duty of all, even of the wicked to pray, and that God will never charge the act of prayer upon him as sin, but his obliquity therein; much less will he impute to thee another sinful frame of heart, with whom thou joynest in prayer. Pray thou in faith, and his unbelief shall not prejudice thy faith, nor his pride thy humility. Thou joynest with him in the duty, but hast no communion with his sin. You may as well say, If a cut-purse in the time of prayer should pick anothers pocket, that all the company are guilty of his theft. How much better were it (Christian) to fear, lest thou pray with a wicked heart in thy own bosom, than with a wicked person in thy family? Thou art like neither to hurt thy own soul by praying in his company; nor better his, by omitting the duty for his sake. May be, though he be carnal, yet he is outwardly complying, and how knowest thou but thy prayer (especially in his presence) may pierce his heart, and give a lift towards his conversion? Such I have heard of, who have had the first sensible impression made upon their hearts in this duty of prayer. If he be not only carnal, but a mocker at the worship of God, and a disturber of the duty; better thou shouldst with Abraham turn such an Ishmael out of doors, than for his sake turn God out of doors, by denying him the worship due unto him.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A Reproof to those that unnecessarily throw themselves in such families, where the worship of God is not set up.

Use 1. **O**F Reproof to those Christians, who needlessly, and upon choice, throw themselves upon such families, where the worship of God is not set up. Dost thou know whither thou goest? thou art running with *Jonah* from the presence of the Lord, and maist expect a storm to be sent after thee. Haply thou art a servant, who once didst live in a godly family, where thou hadst many sweet privileges, and spiritual advantages, a table spread every day for thy soul as oft as for thy body, (besides some exceedings now and then of extraordinary duties) and thereby didst enjoy a kind of heaven upon earth; but for a little ease in thy work, or gain in thy wages thou hast made this unhappy change, to put thy self under the roof of those, who will sooner learn thee to curse and swear, than to pray; and where by the order kept in the family thou canst not know a Lords-day from a week-day, or whether there be such a thing as Religious worship and invocation due to thy Maker or no. Alas, poor creature! what wert thou even now in so green a pasture, and now wandering upon the barren heath, where nothing is to be got for thy precious soul? where (as on the *Mountains of Gilboa*) none of those heavenly dews fall with which thy soul was wont to be wet and wa-

tered? Truly thou art gone out of Gods blessing into the warm Sun. Had God indeed cast thee by a necessary providence on such a place, thou mightest then have hoped to keep thy spiritual plight (though wanting thy former repast) but being thy own choice, it is to be feared thou wilt soon pine and languish in thy spiritual state, leanness is like to shrivel up thy soul, while thou hast thy fat morsels in thy mouth. Thy spirit will grow light and poor, though thy purse may grow heavy; we shall have thee ere long complain (as *Naomi*) that thou wentest out full, but comest home empty. How dardest thou chuse to dwell, where God himself doth not by his gracious presence? He inhabits the praises of his people, and takes his abode in the house of prayer. And if the holy Spirit dwells not, walks and breathes not in the house, it must needs be haunted with the evil one. Make thy stay there as short as may be. Leave the dead to dwell with the dead, Atheist with Atheist; thy safety will be to get among better company. Is the Church so barren of godly families, that no such are to be found who will open their door to let thee in? Go, enquire where such live, and offer to do the meanest office in that house where thou maist enjoy thy former privileges for thy soul, rather than stay where thou art. The very beasts

beasts groan to serve the wicked, whereas Holy Angels themselves disdain not to minister unto the Saints.

Quest. But haply thou wilt say, 'Tis not thy choice, but necessity. Thou art by thy parents put apprentice to a master that is wicked, or thou livest under thy own parents shadow, and thou canst not help it though they be prophane; or with an husband whom thou didst hope (at thy choice of him) would prove a meet help to thy soul, but thou findest it otherwise, what would you have us in this case to do?

Ans. First, Mourn under it as thy great affliction. Thus *David* did, when he lived in *Saul's* wicked family, whose court and family (for irreligion and prophaneness) he compareth to the barbarous *Arabians*, and prophane *Ishmaelites*, lamenting that he was coopt up with such, whom by his relation he could not well leave, and for their wickedness he could worse bear; *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesheck, and dwell in the tents of Kedar.*

Secondly, Be the more in thy secret communion with God. If thou didst live with a niggard, who pinch'd thee for thy belly, wouldst thou not, though thou hadst but a penny in thy purse, lay it out for bread rather than starve? Thou hadst need have a bit the more in a corner, because thou art cut short of thy daily bread in the family; thy soul cannot live without communion with God. Take that thyself which others will not be so kind to allow thee; and that thou maist do this, husband all thy ends of time the better. Thou shalt thus by Gods blessing, keep thy spiritual life and vigour; *secondly*, be antidoted against the infection of that prophane air thou breathest in; and *thirdly*, have a vent to ease thy incumbered spirit of those griefs, reproaches, and trials thou canst not but meet with from such relations. Gracious *Hannah* had an adversary in the same family, (*Peninnah* by name) who provoked her sorely, even to make her fret; but this sent her to God in prayer, and there she eased her soul of her burden.

Thirdly, Adorn thy piety to God by faithful per-

formance of thy duty to thy relations (though they be not so good as thou desirest.) Art thou a servant, and thy Master prophane? be thou submissive and humble, diligent and faithful, let him see that thou darest not rob him of thy time by sloth, or wrong him in his estate by fallshoods (though he be a thief to thy soul by not providing for it) but dost with thy utmost skill and strength endeavour to discharge thy trust to him. We see too oft, that the unfaithfulness and negligence of some professing servants, do set their carnal masters further off from the worship of God than before they were, yea, make them loath the duties of Religion, which otherwise they might have been won unto, till at last they come to think all profession and forwardness in the duties of piety towards God, to be but an hypocritical cloak to cover some unfaithfulness to men, and to say of their servants, when they beg leave to go to a Sermon, and wait on God in his Ordinances, as *Pharaoh* of the *Israelites*, *Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore say ye; Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord, Exod. 5. 17.* Thus as the Apostle tells us, the Name of God and his Doctrine comes to be blasphemed by the ill behaviour of professing servants, *1 Tim. 6. 1.* Again, Art thou a wife, and thy husband carnal, who lives without any care of his own soul, or those under his roof? Pray the more for him because he prays not with thee; pray thou for thy family in thy closet, though he neglects it in the house: But with this, be sure to commend thy piety to thy husbands conscience, and make it as legible as may be to his eye, by thy meekness of wisdom in thy carriage to him; and whole conversation in thy family. A fair print invites to read the Book; Religion fairly printed in thy meek and dutiful behaviour to him, and discretion in all thy affairs, how knowest thou but it may in time win him to the consideration of the excellency of Religion, which makes thee so officious and faithful to him? He is an unwise angler that scares the fish he desires to take, and he an unwise Christian, that by her peevish and undutiful carriage offends her husband, whose conversion she desires and prays for.

CHAP. XXXIX.

A word of counsel to those that live in praying-families.

Use 2. **A** Word of counsel to you, whom God hath planted in Religious families.

First, Bless God for casting thy lot in so pleasant a seat, and fruitful a soil for thy soul, where thou maist suck in the sweet air of Gods Spirit, that breaths from thy Godly parents or other Governours, at the throne of grace from day to day; that thou art not wedg'd into some blind atheistical family, there to live with a godless crew, among whom thou mightest have passed thy days without any knowledge of thy Maker, and with them have been involved in that curse of God, which is in the house of the wicked, and hangs like a black cloud in the threatening, ready to pour down upon the families that call not upon his

Name. Look round thy neighbourhood, and see how many families there are, who live like brutes (as in so many dark caves and dens) where none of that Heavenly light is seen from one end of the year to the other, which shines on thy face every day. What nurture and breeding should thy soul have had under the tutoring of such parents and masters, who themselves live without God in the world? The Queen of *Sheba* counted them happy that stood before *Solomon*, not so much that they might see his pomp, but hear his wisdom. O happy thou (if grace to know thy privilege) that thou ministr'st unto a Godly Master, art under gracious parents, or yoked to a holy husband, from whose devout prayers, pious

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counsels,

counfels, and Christian examples, thou may'ft gain more, than if they had the wealth, delicacies, and preferments of Solomon's Court to confer upon thee.

Secondly, Look you may make improvement of this spiritual advantage, or else it will go worfe with you than others. Rebellion *Israel* is told, *They shall know that they had a Prophet among them*; the meaning is, they shall know it to their cost; and so shall those that have lived in families, under such Governours, who went before them, and as it were chalked out a way to heaven by their godly example, lamenting over their precious souls so oft with their prayers and tears: If such miscarry, they shall know to their terrour what families they once lived in, but had not a heart to prize or improve the mercy. God forbid that any of you should find the way to hell out of such doors, and force your way to damnation through such means afforded to prevent it. What will *Cain* answer, when his father that begat him shall bear witness against him, and

say, Lord, this wicked child of mine never learned his Atheism of me; I brought him to thy worship, and taught him thy fear, but he liked it not, and first proved a murderer, and then an apostate; first, he behaved himself wickedly in thy service, and then ran out of thy doors and cast it quite off? What will then the flouting wife of *David*, who (though of a wicked stock) was privileged with so gracious a husband, say, when she shall be accused for making him her laughing-stock for his zeal in the worship of God? Or how will the wicked children of the same holy man, who walked with such uprightness in his house, look their godly father on the face at the great day? You, my children, said dying *Mr. Bolton*, dare not, I believe, meet me at the day of judgement in an unregenerate state: The weight of such holy mens prayers and admonitions will then sink their ungodly relations deeper into hell, than others, who drop thither out of dark and blind families.

CHAP. XL.

A word to those Governours of Families, that have not the worship of GOD in their houses.

THirdly, Unto you that are heads of Families, but yet have not had a heart to set up the worship of God in them, I am afraid God hath little from you in your closets, who hath none in your families; 'Tis no breach of charity to suspect your care for your own souls, that shew none for your relations: If ever thou hadst been acquainted with God thy self, and tasted any sweetness in secret communion with him, couldst thou thus rob thy family of so great a blessing? could you find such a treasure, and hide it from them you love so well? Have they not souls as precious in their bosomes as thy own? art thou not willing they should find the way to heaven as well as thy self? yea, art thou not Gods seoffee in trust to take care of their souls as well as of their bodies? dost thou owe no more to thy child and servant than to thy hog or horse? their bodies are looked to, and wilt thou do no more for the other? How knowest thou but thy holy example in the duties of Gods worship among them, may leave such impressions on their hearts, as shall never be worn off to their dying day? Did you never hear any of the praise of God acknowledge, that the first turn towards heaven they ever had, was by living in such a godly family, where with the worship of God, a favour and secret sense of the things of God did secretly steal into their hearts? Certainly were our youth more acquainted with the duties of Religion in private, the Ministers work would be much facilitated in the publick: By this, the consciences of many would be preserved tender, and so become more pliable to the counfels of the Word preached; whereas now the Devil hath a sad advantage (from the irreligion and atheism that is in most families) to harden their hearts to such a degree, as renders them almost impenetrable. It is no won-

der to see that tree thrives not, which stands but little in the Sun; and as little wonder to see them continue prophane and wicked, that but once in a week come under the beams of an ordinance, and then see nor hear any more of God till the Sabbath comes about again. Alas! How is it like the spark should then be found alive, which had all along the week nothing to keep it from dying? One well compareth the publick Ministry to the Mason that builds the house, and family governours to them that make the brick. Now if you (by neglecting your duty) bring clay instead of brick, you make the Ministers work double. The truth is, the neglect of family worship, opens a wide flood-gate to let in a deluge of prophaneness into the Church. Thou livest now without the worship of God in thy family, and haply in a few years from under thy own hive swarm many other families (children or servants) and it is most like that they will follow thy copy: Indeed it were a wonder, that they who are taught no better should do otherwise; and so irreligion is like to spread apace. When thy head is laid in the dust, thy prophaneness is not buried in thy grave with thee; no, thou leavest others behind to keep it alive. O how dismal is it to lay the foundation of a sin to many generations! the children unborn may rise up and curse such. If I had heard my father pray, may the child say (in a dying hour) or had been led into the acquaintance of the worship of God by his example, then had not I lived like a Heathen as I have done. Well, as you would not have your children and servants meet you in the other world with their mouths full of out-cries and accusations; or if this (because it seems further off) dread you not, as you would not have them prove a plague and scourge to you in this world, let not your family government

be irreligious : It is just that God should suffer thy servant to be unfaithful to thee in thy estate, who art so to his soul ; that thy children when old should forget their duty to thee, that didst bring them up like Heathens in their youth, without learning them their duty to God.

CHAP. XLI.

To those Governours of Families that perform this Duty.

Fourthly, To you that have set up this duty in your Families, a few words of counsel for the more holy management thereof.

SECT. I.

First, Think it not enough to prove thee a Saint that thou prayest in thy family ; you may set up the worship of God in your house, and not enthrone God in your hearts. God forbid that you should bless your selves in this, and dub your selves Saints because of this ; Alas, you are not as yet got so far as some hypocrites have gone. The duty is good, but the outward performance of it doth not demonstrate any to be so. There are many turnings to hell nearer heaven than this. From the act therefore look to the end thou proposest to thy self in it. He is a foolish archer that shoots his arrow before he hath taken his aim aright. The question God asks, is, *Doest thou at all pray to me, even to me?* Thou may'st possibly affect others with thy praying, yea, be instrumental to break their hearts by thy confessions, and refresh their spirits by the sweet expressions that flow from thee, thy self playing the hypocrite all the while. It behoves thee therefore to consider, what is the weight and spring which sets this duty a-going in thy family, is it not to gain an opinion of being religious in others thoughts? if so, thou playest at small game ; indeed Religion were a sorry thing, if this were all to be got by it. When thou hast obtained this end, it will not ease thee of one stitch of conscience, nor quench one spark in hell tormenting fire for thee ; but if this be it thou profess after, 'tis a question whether thou believest there be such a place or no. These few principles well girded by faith about the loins of thy mind, That there is a God, and he a rewarder of those that diligently seek him ; That Heaven is prepared for the sincere, and Hell gapes for the hypocrite, would be enough to set thy heart right in the duty. Though the Traveller minds not much his way, where he apprehends no danger ; yet when he comes to pass over a narrow bridge, where a wry step may hazard his life by falling into a deep River that runs on each hand, he will surely watch his eye that is to guide his foot. This is thy case. Prayer is a solemn work, as any thou canst go about in thy whole lifetime ; a by-end in this may hazard thy soul as much, as a wry look thy body in the other. We need do no more to lose our souls, than to seek our selves.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Take heed thou blottest not thy holy duties with an unholy life. If thou meanest to foul thy hands with sins black work in the day, why dost thou wash them in the morning with Prayer? It is to no purpose to begin with GOD, and to keep the Devil company all the day after ; Religious orders in thy house, and a disordered conversation ill agree. O! do not render the worship of God base to the thoughts of thy servants and family. Those that like the wine, will yet nauseate it when brought in a cup that is nasty and unclean. The duties of Gods worship command a reverence even from those that are carnal, but if performed by those that are loose and scandalous, they grow fulsome. Eli's sons made the people loath the Lords Sacrifices. By thy religious duties thou settest a fair copy, O do not write it in sinking paper. It is but a while thou art seen upon thy knees, and a little seeming zeal at thy devotion, will not gild over a whole days sinful miscarriage, spent in passion, idleness, riot, or any other unholy course. It is said, that *Christ preached with power and authority, not as the Scribes*, Matth. 7. 39. not but that they had authority to preach, for they sat in Moses his chair ; but because they lost that reverence, by not walking suitably to their doctrine, which their place and work would have given them in the consciences of their hearers, *They said, and did not*, and thereby rendred their doctrine ineffectual. If thou wouldst pray with authority and power, enforce thy duties with purity of life.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Preserve peace and unity in thy family : a brawling family cannot be a praying family. The Apostle exhorteth husband and wife to love and unity, *lest their prayers be hindered* ; 1 Pet. 3. 3. Contentions in a family, they both hinder the spirit of prayer, and also the answer to our prayers. First, They hinder the spirit of prayer ; the Spirit of God is a Spirit of peace and love, and therefore delights not to breathe in a troubled air ; the ready way to send him going, is to brawl and chide. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God*, (saith the Apostle) Ephes. 4. 30. and that we may not, hear what is his counsel ; *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice* : When these are gone, then (and not before) look for his sweet company. You may as well dwell comfortably together with your house on fire,

as pray to together, when you in the house are on fire. Secondly, Contentions hinder the answer to our prayers; if we pray in anger, God cannot be pleased. *The wrath of man fulfills not the righteousness of God.* A loud wind beats down the timber. Our prayers are compared to *Incense*, but they will never ascend to heaven till this storm be laid; go to pray in this plight, and God will bid you come when you are better agreed; the Spirit will not help in such prayers, and if the Spirit hath no hand in the inditing, Christ will have no hand in presenting the Prayer; and if Christ present it not, to be sure the Father will not receive it, for *through him we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father*, Ephes. 2. 18.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Be very choice whom thou makest a member of thy family; get, if thou canst, such under thy roof as may give a lift with thee in thy family-worship. Though it be not thy sin to pray with a wicked wife and servant, yet it is thy sin to make choice of such for thy relations, (if otherwise thou canst help it) yet alas, how little is this considered? though the blessing and comfort of the family be deeply concerned therein; a little beauty, honour, or pelf, do too oft blind the eyes, and bribe the judgements of those, who we may hope to be themselves gracious, that they can yoke themselves with such as are very unmeet to draw with them in heaven-way and work; *David* knew that *Michal* came of a bad stock, but haply hoped to bring her over to comply with him in the service of God, and we see what a grievous cross she proved to him. *Solomon* tells us of some that trouble their own house, *Prov. 15. 27.* He that for carnal respects takes a wicked wife into his bosom, or servant into his family, is the man that is sure to do this! Haply when he would pray and praise God, his wife like *Job's* will bid him curse; when he is at duty, she will despise him in her heart, and make a mock of his zeal, as *Michal* did of *David's*. And so they, who for some natural abilities they see in a servant, venture on him, though wicked and ungodly, pay dearly for it; such often bring with them that plague of prophaneity which infects the rest; so that what they earn their Masters with their hands, they rob them of with their sins, which brings the curse of God to their family. Who that is wise would build a house with Timber that is on fire? If the servant thou entertainest be wicked, fire is in him, that will endanger thy house. Make it therefore thy care to plant a godly family. This was *David's* resolution, haply he saw the evil of his former choice, *Mine eyes shall be on the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies shall not carry in my sight,* *Psal. 101. 6, 7.* Then the Musick will be sweet in thy family-duties, when thou canst get a consort into thy house; such whose souls are in tune for those holy services thou art to joyn with them in.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Keep a Diary of thy family-sins and mercies, that so neither the one may escape thy confession and humiliation, nor the other thy grateful recognition: if this were observed, we should not come with such jejune and barren hearts to the work, as now alas most do. Take some time to affect thy heart with both these, the brokenness of thy heart who prayest, will conduce much towards the same disposition in those that joyn with thee; nothing melts metal sooner than to pour that on it which is melted: The drowsie speaker prays oft the rest asleep that join with him. Take heed therefore of formality, that is the canker which eats out the very heart of religious duties. Remember thou art to thy family what the Minister is to the publick assembly, as the deadness of his heart in Prayer and Preaching hath a bad operation upon his people to make them like himself, so hath thine on thy family: Thou dost not only suffer a personal loss thy self, but wrongest the rest of thy company: As when thou wastest thy estate, thy wife, children, servants, and all fare the worse, and must pinch for it; so when thou choakest up thy heart with inordinate cares of the world, or any other way indisposest thy self by thy sinful walking, for the duty of prayer, thy whole family goes by the loss with thee.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, Observe the fittest seasons for duty in thy family, when with most freedom and least disturbance it may be performed; in the morning, take the opportunity before a throng of worldly business crowds in upon thee. In some families I have observed (where they are in great employments) that if duty be delayed till some worldly occasions be dispatch'd; then, either it hath been shut out, or shut up in such straits of time, that the slighty slovenly manner of performing it hath proved little better than the total neglect. To prevent this disorder, it is best to forestall the worlds market, betimes in the morning to set upon the duty, and offer up to God the first-fruits of the day, before our thoughts meet with a diversion. We read, *Exod. 16. 21.* that the *Israelites gathered their Manna early in the morning, and when the Sun waxed hot it melted.* I would wish (especially such who have multiplicity of worldly occasions) to take their time for communion with God early, while their thoughts are more compact, before they are hot in their worldly business, lest they then find their thoughts so diffused and scattered among other businesses, as will not easily be gathered into a close and united attendance upon God in the duty. Again, when night comes, delay not the work till ye are more fit to go to your Pillow than to your Cushion, to sleep than to pray. If the eye sleep, the soul cannot well wake. Especially consider your servants that labour hard in the day, O do not expose them to the temptation of drowsie Prayers; if our hearts took

took delight in the work, we would plot and contrive which would be the best time for communion with

God, even as Lovers do how and when they may most privately meet together.

CHAP. XLI.

Of publick Prayer, that God requires it, and why?

Secondly, The second kind of social or joynt prayer is *Publick*; that which is made in and by the Church assembled together for the worship of God. In handling of which I shall endeavour these five things.

First, To shew, That God requires a publick worship of his people.

Secondly, That Prayer is a part of this publick worship he commands.

Thirdly, Why God requires a publick worship, and in particular, publick Prayer.

Fourthly, I shall resolve a question or two concerning publick prayer.

Fifthly and lastly, I shall make some applicatory improvement of this head.

SECT. I.

First, For the first, That God requires a publick worship of his people. This word *Cultus* or worship in general, is *obsequium alicui praeistum juxta excellentiam ejus*. Worship is that honour and service which we give to any one according to his excellency; and it is threefold, Civil, Moral, or Divine. *Civil* worship is the due honour and service we pay to a person in place and power over us, as Prince, Father, or Master. *Moral*, is that due reverence and respect which we pay to a person, that hath any excellency of virtue or place, without authority over us. Thus we give honour and veneration both to the Saints living on Earth with us, and to the Angels and Saints in Heaven. *Religious or divine* worship, is the honour and service we give to that Being, which we believe is the Author of our beings, and Fountain of our happiness. Now, this Being is God, and he only. To him therefore, and him alone is Religious worship due: *Deut. 6. 13, 14. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name; ye shall not go after other gods.* This Religious worship of the true God comes under divers distinctions, Inward and Outward, Private and Publick. The publick worship of God is the present subject of our discourse, that I mean, which the Congregation performs to him in their Religious Assemblies, called *Psal. 89. 5. the Congregation of Saints; and vers. 9. the Assembly of Saints.* The Church of God on Earth began in a family, and so did the worship of God: But when the number encreased, the worship of God also became more publick, *Gen. 4. 26. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, that is, they began publickly, (saith Mercer,) Seth and other of the Religious seed began to have their Holy Assemblies for the service of God, *Willett in locum.* It is observable, how God at the promulgation of the Law on Sinai, when he first formed the Israelites in-

to a *Polity*, took special care for erecting a publick worship to his Name. That was the day of their *sponsals*, *Jer. 2. 2.* and then he instituted a solemn form of publick worship, with exact rules how it should be performed. The same care took our Lord Jesus for his Gospel-Church; in appointing both Church-Ordinances and Officers to dispense the same.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Prayer is part of that Religious worship, which the Church is to perform to God in her publick Assemblies, yea, a principal part, put therefore frequently for the whole, *Zech. 8. 21, 22. The inhabitants of one City shall go unto another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts. I will go also. Yea, many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord of Hosts.* It is a prophetic, how believers in Gospel-times should zealously provoke one another to go to the Assemblies of the Church, (of which Jerusalem was a Type) there to pray and worship God together. *It is written* (saith our Saviour) *my house shall be called of all Nations the house of prayer, Mark 11. 17.* This was partially performed, when Converts in the Apostles days did flock to Jerusalem, there to worship God. *Sed perfectè impletum est illud in Christi Ecclesia ex omnibus gentibus collecta, &c.* It is more fully accomplished in the Church of Christ, gathered out of all Nations, that should keep up the worship of God in her Assemblies. Saint Luke forgets not to mention this of prayer, amongst the other duties and offices of primitive Christians in their Assemblies, *Act. 2. 42. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* By continuing stedfast in the Apostles doctrine, Mr. Perkins understands their attendance on the Apostles Sermons; by fellowship, understands their contributions to the poor, which were gathered at their Assemblies, a work very fit for that place, *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb. 13.* by breaking of bread, the Celebration of the Lords Supper; and by prayers, those which they put up together in communion at their Church-meetings. Nor is this of prayer crowded last, because the least duty of the company; but rather, because it hath a necessary influence into them all, the Word and Sacraments, which God useth to sanctifie his people by, are themselves sanctified to us by Prayer. And Saint Paul, when he hath shewn, *1 Tim. 1. what doctrine Ministers are to preach in the Church, he in the second Chapter directs them what to insist chiefly on in their publick prayer; I exhort*

exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for Kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

This the Church of Christ ever esteemed a principal part of their publick worship. *Tertullian* speaking of the Assemblies of the Church, saith, *Coimus in cœtum & congregationem, ut ad Deum quasi manu facta precatationibus ambiamus orantes, hac vis Deo grata est.* We meet in the Congregation, that we may by our fervent prayers environ God, as an Army doth a Castle, and this holy force with which we assault heaven pleaseth him. I proceed to the third Head, to give some account, Why God requires a publick worship, or a joynt service of his people in communion together, and why this particular duty of Prayer.

SECT. III.

First, As a free and open acknowledgement of their dependance on, and allegiance to God. It is most reasonable we should own the Gbd we serve, even in the face of the world, and not like *Nicodemites* carry our Religion in a dark Lanthorn. He is unworthy of his Masters service, that is ashamed to wear his livery, and follow him in the street with it on his back. *This day (saith Moses to Israel) thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgements, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day, to be his peculiar people, Deut. 26. 17, 18.* Even Heathens understand thus much, that they owe a free profession and publick service to the God they vouch, *All people walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of the LORD our God for ever and ever, Micah 4. 5.* Now by walking in the Name of God, they mean, they will invoke his Name, and vouch him by a publick worship, as you may see by the first and second verses of that Chapter. And this is a Gospel-prophecie concerning the last days. Where by the way we may take notice of the folly and pride of those, that cast off publick Ordinances and private also, from a pretence of their high attainments, leaving these duties of Religion as strings for those that are yet children to be led by. This is horrible pride and ignorance, to have such a high opinion of themselves. But were they so perfect as they falsely imagine themselves, and needed not any further teaching, yet ought they not still to vouch God by worshipping of him? The ground from which divine worship becomes due to God, is his own infinite perfections, and our dependance on him as the Author of beings, and fountain of our blifs. Hence it is, that Angels and Saints in heaven worship him, though in a way suitable to their glorified state. Some Ordinances indeed fitted to the Church militant on earth, shall there cease; but a worship remains, yea, 'tis their constant employment. Saints on earth serve God always, but cannot always worship, therefore they have stated times appointed them. Now to cast off the worship of God, is to renounce God himself, and

communion with his Church both on earth and in heaven. *Isa. 65. 11. Te are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy Mountain;* they did not give him his publick worship, and he interprets this as a casting him off from being their God. Sometimes I confesse the Church doors are shut by Persecutors, and when this flood is up the ways to Zion mourn; yet then we are to lament after the Lord and his Ark. Holy David was no stranger to private Devotions, yet could not but bewail his banishment from the publick, *My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary, Psal. 6. 3.*

Secondly, To preserve Love and Unity in the Church. God is one, and dearly loves oneness and unity among his people. This reason he gives why he would have the Curtains of the Tabernacle coupled together, *That it might be one Tabernacle, Exod. 36. 13-18.* The fastning of these Curtains so lovingly together for this end, that the Tent might be one, signified the knitting and clasping together of the Saints in love. Now though this be effected principally by the inward operation of the holy Spirit upon their hearts, for he alone can knit souls, and knead them into one lump; yet he useth their joynt communion in Ordinances as a happy means, through which he may convey and derive his grace that fastens them in love together. These are the ligaments that tie one member to another in this mystical body. And do we not see that Christians (like members of the natural body) take care for, and sympathize with one another, so long as they are united in one communion; but when these ligaments are cut, communion in worship is broke, then we see one member drops from another, and little care for, or love to each other, is to be found among them. The Apostle saw good reason to joyn both these in one Exhortation, *Heb. 10. 24, 25. Let us consider one another to provoke to love, not forsaking the assembling of our selves together;* as if he had said, If you cannot agree to worship God one with another, you will have little love one for another. When the Jews staff of Beauty was cut asunder, the staff of Bands did not last long unbroken, *Zech. 11. 10.* Religion hath its name a *Religando*, it is a strong binder; break the beautified order of Church-communion, and a people will soon fall all to pieces. It is observable, how endearing conversation and communion is in things of an inferiour nature, Scholars that go to School together, those that board in the same house, *Collactanei*, that suck the same milk, Twins that lie together in the same belly, they have a mutual endearment of affection each to another. How influential then must Church-communion needs be, where all these meet? when they shall consider they go to the same publick School of the Ministry, sit at the same Table of the Sacrament, suck the same breasts of Ordinances, and lie together in the bosom, yea, womb of the same Church. This was admirably seen in the primitive Christians, who by Fellowship in Ordinances were inspired with such a wonderful love to one another, that they could hardly find their hearts in their own breasts:

Act. 2. All that believed were together, and continued in the Temple with one accord, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. But when a breach was made in the Churches communion, then love catcht her cold, which grew upon Christians as divisions increased. Now one would think, the cause of our disease being so easily known, the cure should not be so hard, as alas at this day we find it.

Thirdly, For the Saints safety and defence against their enemies. Paul rejoiced at the order and stedfastness of the *Colossian Saints*; 2 *Col. 5.* Order is a military word, and denotes *coboritem ordine apto conglobatum*, an Army compact, and cast into such a fit order, that every part is helpful to each other for its defence; and such an Army are the Saints, when they stand in communion together according to divine rule. Our blessed Saviour, when departing from earth to heaven, what course took he to leave his Disciples in a defensive posture after he was gone? doth he send them home to look every one to himself? No, but to *Jerusalem* there to stand, as it were in a body by joynt communion, *Act. 1.* The Drop is safe in the River, lost when sever'd from it; the Souldier safe when marching with the Army, but snapt when he straggles from it. Cain looking upon himself as an excommunicated person from the Church of God, expected some great evil (as well he might) would befall him. Therefore the gracious soul (meant by the Spouse) is brought in asking, where the Assembly of the faithful is, that joining herself to it she may be protected in a time of danger, *Cant. 1. 7.* Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon? for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

Fourthly, Because of the great delight he takes in

the joynt prayers and praises of his people. We need not detract from the excellency of private devotions, to magnifie the publick prayers of the Church, both are necessary, and highly pleasing to God; yet it is no wrong to the private devotions of a particular Saint, to give the precedency to the publick prayers of the Church. God himself tells us, *Psal. 87. 2.* He loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. No doubt the prayers which the faithful put up to heaven from under their private roofs, were very acceptable unto him; but if a Saints single voice in prayer be so sweet to Gods ear, much more the Church-quire, his Saints prayers in consort together. A father is glad to see any one of his children, and makes him welcom when he visits him, but much more when they come together, the greatest feast is when they all meet at his house. The publick praises of the Church are the emblem of heaven it self, where all the Angels and Saints make but one consort. There is a wonderful prevalency in the joynt prayers of his people. When Peter was in prison, the Church meets and prays him out of his enemies hands. A Prince will grant a Petition subscribed by the hands of a whole City, which may be he would not at the request of a private subject, and yet love him well too. There is an especial promise to publick prayer, *Matth. 18. 20.* Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them: *Non dicat ero, non enim tardat vel cunctatur, sed sum jam illic, invenior prasens gratia & favore singulari, eo quod summopere me delectet hujusmodi concordia:* He doth not say, I will, for he makes no delay or demur upon the business: But I am there (let them come as soon as they will) present by my special favour and grace, because this concord in prayer highly pleaseth me. It is the gloss of *Lucas Brugens.* upon the place.

CHAP. XLII.

Two Questions about Publick Prayer Answered.

Fourthly, I come to answer a Question or two concerning Publick Prayer.

SECT. I.

Quest. 1. The first Question is, Whether it be lawful that the Publick Prayers of the Church be performed in a Language not understood by the people?

Ans. All the offices of the Church, and duties performed in its worship, are to be done unto edification: This is an *Apostolical Canon*. Now none can be edified by what he understands not, and therefore it must needs be, as *Bexa* calls the *Papish Latine Service*, *Ludibrium Dei & hominis*, a mocking of God and man, for to babble such prayers in the Church which the people know not what they mean. *If I pray (saith the Apostle) in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful,* 1 *Cor. 14. 4.* he means, the Congregation are not

the wiser for his understanding the prayer he puts up; except he could make them understand it also. We can no more be edified by anothers Intellect, than be saved by anothers faith. When God intended to defeat that bold attempt of those sons of pride, who would needs build a Tower that should vie with the heavens for height, he did no more but confound their languages that they might not understand one anothers speech, and it was done, presently their work ceased: And as they could not build, so neither can he edifie the people that understands not his speech in prayer. A dumb Minister may serve the peoples turn as well as he who by his speech is a Barbarian to them; for the Ministers voice is necessary in his publick administrations, as *Augustine* saith, *Significanda mentis sua causa, non ut Deus sed ut homines audiam, &c.* To signifie his meaning, not that God may hear, for he hears those prayers which the tongue is not employed to expresse, but that the people may hear, and so joyn their Votes with his to God.

God. As the Minister is to pray for them, so they to pray with him, which they are to testify by their hearty *Amen* at the close: But this they cannot do, if we believe St. Paul, 1 Cor. 14. 16. *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth* (saith Solomon) Prov. 16. 23. that is, he will not (as we say) suffer his tongue to run before his wit, but know what he shall speak, before he sends his tongue on his errand. And surely above all this, wisdom is to be shewn in our prayers, wherein we speak not to man, but God. To say *Amen* to that prayer which we understand not, what is it but to offer the sacrifice of fools? Holy-matter in prayer is the incense to be offered, the tongue is the censor, but the affections of the devout soul bring the fire to the incense, before it can ascend as a sweet perfume into the nostrils of God. Now if the intellect want light to understand what the matter of the prayer is, the affections must either be cold, or wild, and wild-fire is unfit to offer up the incense of prayer with. It is not enough that the praying soul be touched with some devout affections, but that these affections be suitable to the matter of the prayer, yea, arise from the sense it hath thereof.

S E C T. II.

Set Forms

Quest. 2. The second Question is, Whether a Set-form of prayer be lawful to be used in the Church?

If it be unlawful, it is, because by the use of a Set-form in prayer, some command of God is transgressed; for where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Now it will trouble those who decry all set forms (how holy soever the matter of them be) to shew any command upon Scripture-record that forbids the praying by a set-form, or that disallows its use, either in expresse terms, or by necessary consequence. It will be granted, yea must, that the Scripture is a perfect rule in this particular duty of Gods worship, as well as in other. But among all the precepts and rules in the Book of God, we find none that commands we should pray by a conceived form, and not by a set form. We are commanded *who to pray to*, to God, and none other, Psal. 44. 20. *In whose name we are to pray*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. Ephes. 5. 20. we are bound up to the matter of our prayer, *what we are to ask*, 1 Joh. 5. 14. and lastly in what manner we are to pray, we must pray *with understanding*, Joh. 4. 22. 1 Cor. 14. 16. Heb. 11. 6. *In faith*, Jam. 1. 6. Heb. 11. 4. *with sincere fervency*, Jer. 29. 12. In a word, which comprehends all in one, we are to pray *in the spirit*, Ephes. 6. in the *holy Ghost*, Jude vers. 20. Now he that can do all this, need not fear but he prays lawfully, and consequently acceptably. And we must confess this may be done by one that prayeth with a set form, or else we must very boldly charge many eminent Saints in Scripture for praying unlawfully. Who dares say that Solomon praised God unlawfully, when he used the very form which David his father had penned? or that

Moses did not pray in the spirit, because he prayed in a constant form at the setting forward of the Ark, and at its setting down again? Thus you have seen what God hath prescribed to our praying acceptably; and if it had been of such dangerous consequence to have prayed by a set form, as to make our prayers abominable, would God have omitted to warn his people of it, especially when he fore-saw that his Churches generally in their Assemblies would make use of them, as they have done for thirteen or fourteen hundred years? But may we not rather, yea undoubtedly we ought to conclude, that seeing the Lord in his Word descends not to prescribe what the outward frame and order of our words in prayer should be, whether conceived *ex tempore*, or cast into a form before hand, only gives general rules, that all things should be done decently, that we be not rash with our mouth, or our heart hasty to utter any thing before God, and such like, that are applicable to both) I say we should conclude, both are lawful and warrantable, the Scripture having determined neither the one way nor the other: And therefore to put Religion in one, so as to condemn the other as unlawful, looks (as a learned holy Pen hath it) too like superstition, seeing God himself hath laid no bond upon the conscience either way. As for the excellency of conceived prayer, wherein the devout Christian out of the abundance of his heart pours out his requests to God, none but a prophane spirit dares open his mouth against it. But is there no way to magnifie the excellency of that, but by vilifying and imputing sin to the other? Alas! the evil is not in a form, but in formality, and that is a disease that may be found in him that prays with a conceived prayer. A man may pray without a form, and yet not pray without formality. Though I confess he that binds himself constantly to a set form (especially in his private addresses,) seems to me to be more in danger of the two to fall under the power of that lazy distemper. But to hasten the dispatch of this Question, (for I intend not a full discourse of this point, but would top a few heads only, which you may find more largely insisted on in many worthy Treatises on this subject) I would desire those that scruple the lawfulness of all set forms, to look wisely upon those set forms of blessing, prayers and thanksgiving that are upon Scripture-record, and were used by the servants of God with his approbation, and then consider whether God would prescribe or accept what is unlawful? The Priests had a form of blessing the people, Numb. 6. 23. Moses used (as I hinted) a form of prayer at the remove of the Ark, *Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee*: and when it was set down, another form, *Return, O Lord, unto the thousands of Israel*, Numb. 10. 35. which very form was continued and used by David, Psal. 68. 1. Asaph and his brethren had set forms of thanksgiving given to them to use in their publick service, 1 Chron. 16. 17. *On that day David delivered this Psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren*. This was the first he appointed to be sung in the publick service, the several parts whereof were afterwards much enlarged, as you may see by

by comparing the 105. Psalm with the former part of the song in the place fore-quoted, and Psalm 96. with the latter part of it. At the Dedication of the Temple, Solomon used the very form of words in praising God which his father had penned, 2 Chron. 7. 6. Good Hezekiah commands the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, 2 Chron. 29. 30. This holy man no doubt was able to have poured forth extemporarie praises, as it is thought he did in that prayer which he on the sudden put up upon the occasion of that railing Letter sent him, 2 King. 19. 14. yet did not think it un-

lawful to use a form in this publick administration. Yea, our blessed Saviour, an instance beyond all instances, both gave a form of prayer to his Disciples, and himself diddained not to pray three several times one after another the very same form of words, *Matth. 26. 44. He left them, and went again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.* And that Hymn which he sang with his Disciples is conceived by the Learned to be that portion of Psalms which the Jews used at the celebration of the Pass-over: see Beza and Gerhard Harmo. in locum.

CHAP. XLIII.

This Head of Publick Prayer briefly improved.

Fifthly, I come now to the fifth thing propounded in prosecution of this Head of Publick Prayer, and that is Applicatory.

SECT. I.

Use 1. First, This shews, what reason the people of God (where-ever they live) have to pray for good Magistrates, especially Kings and Princes: *Ragna sunt hospitia Ecclesie*, as the Inn is to the Traveller, so Kingdoms are to the Church in its pilgrimage here on earth. As they are, such is its ulage in the world, and entertainment that it finds. *Pray for Kings* (saith the Apostle) *and all in authority, that we may lead peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness and honesty*, 1 Tim. 2. 2. By godliness he means in an especial manner the free profession of the Truth and publick exercise of Gods pure worship. No Magistrates can hinder the Saints living godly, as to the embracing of the Truth in their hearts, and secret performance of prayer. Daniel would and could pray, do Nebuchadnezzar his worst. But Princes carrie the keys of the Church-doors at their girdles, and can shut or open them. When faithful Magistrates sway the Scepter, then the wayes to Zion are easie and open; when enemies to the wayes and worship of God bear rule, then they mourn; Church-doors are shut, and Prison-doors opened to the servants of Christ: Then the Woman lies into the Wilderness, and the Church into private Chambers, as we find in the Apostles dayes, when the Church was met with the doors shut to pray for Peter. O pray for Kings and Princes, for as they carry the keys of the Church-doors, so God carries the key that opens the doors of their hearts at his pleasure.

SECT. II.

Secondly, It reproves those that turn their backs of the publick worship. Now they are of two sorts, the prophane Atheist, the scrupulous Separatist.

First, The irreligious Atheist, such who out of a prophane spirit turn their back of the publick wor-

ship of God. The Jews have a saying of one of their Rabbies much in their mouthes, *Quisquis incolit civitatem in qua exstat Synagoga, & inibi non precatur, is est qui merito dicitur vicinus malus*: He that dwells in a Citie where there is a Synagogue, and comes not to prayers there, he is the person that deserves the name of a bad neighbour. How many bad neighbours do we alas live among, who are seldom seen in the publick Assembly from one end of the year to the other? Many live, as if they had rent the bond that was seal'd at their Baptism, and renounced all homage to their Maker, and would tell the world they owe him no worship. Worse brutes these are than the hog in their stie, or horse in their stable. They were made for our use, and accordingly serve us; Man was intended for the service of his Maker, a creature made for Religion, by which some would define and distinguish the humane nature from that of brutes, rather than by his rational facultie; indeed in some brutes there is a sagacitie, that looks something like mans discursive facultie, but Religion is a thing their nature is wholly incapable of, and therefore nothing makes man so truly a brute as irreligion. The Jewish Talmud propounds this Question, *Why God made man vespere Sabbathi?* and gives this as one reason, *Ut proximus intraret in preceptum*: that is, God made man on the evening just before the Sabbath, that he might forthwith enter upon the observation of the command to sanctifie the Sabbath, and begin his life as it were with the worship of God, which was the chief end why it was given him. May we not therefore wonder at the patience of God in suffering these ungodly wretches to live, that by casting this horrid contempt upon his worship, walk contrary to the very end of their creation? If the Bells which call us to the worship of God, were to give them notice of a Wrestling, Foot-ball, or drunken Wake, O how soon should we have them flock together? but Prayers and Sermons they care not for. What shall we impute this irreligion and atheism of multitudes among us to? surely it proceeds from a criminous conscience. It is said of Cain, *He went out from the presence of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 16. that is, say some Interpreters from that place, where God had his

See

Church

Church and worship, there God is especially present. Guilt indeed makes men afraid of God. This makes them what they can to wear off the thoughts of a Deity that are so troublesome to their flagitious consciences; Now to do this, they have no other way than to shun those duties which will bring God and their sins to their remembrance. *Herod* was soon persuaded to cut off that head, whose tongue was so bold as to tell him of his faults: And prophane hearts are easily drawn to cast off those duties, which will gaul and rub hard upon their sore consciences. But that man is in a miserable case, that knows no way to get ease, but by throwing away the plaister that must heal his wound. Ah poor wretches! this will not serve your turn. What though the Prisoner stops his ears, and will not hear the Judge pronounce the Sentence against him, will that save him from the Gallows? Surely no, but rather procure his being sent thither the sooner, for his contempt of the Court, who had he carried himself better, and humbly begged his life at the Judges hand, might possibly have got the sentence reversed. Whether sinners will hear the Word or no, come to his Worship or no, God will proceed in his work. Flouting against God, and turning thy back on his Worship, is not the way to prevent, but hasten divine vengeance. How much better were it to make thy humble supplication to thy Judge, and wait at the posts of wisdom. While men, though bad, wait on Ordinances there is hope, for they are under the means; but when they cast them off, then their ruine hastens.

Secondly, The scrupulous Separatist, such who do not absent from the publick worship out of a prophane atheistical spirit, as the former, but from some scruples, whether they may lawfully be present at the prayers there put up, because there are some male administrations in the performance of it, or at least which they think to be such; at these they are distast'd, and so withdraw: May be it is because the duty of prayer is performed with a set form, which they conceive unlawful. This I shall wave, having spoken already to it. Or may be it is not a form, but some passages in the form used that offends them, and therefore they dare not be present. So that the Question will be,

Quest. Whether it be lawful to be present at that service, or those prayers in the Congregation, that have something faulty in them?

Answ. To the answering of this Question, we must first distinguish of faults, all are not of a size. There are faults in the matter, and faults in the form and method of a prayer; and faults in the matter may be either fundamental; or of a less nature, such as are not fundamental, nor bordering thereupon; and those less faults may be generally dispersed through the prayer, that it is soured throughout with them, or only in some particular passages. *Secondly*, We must distinguish between approving of the faults, defects, and corruptions that are in a prayer, and being present at the service of God, where some things are done faultily. Now I answer, That it is lawful for a Christian to be present at those prayers, wherein some things may be supposed to be faulty for outward form, yea, and also in matter, in things

not fundamental, nor bordering thereupon, and these not dispersed through the whole body of the prayers, but in some passages only. We may be present, where God is present by his grace and favour. We may follow the Lamb safely wherever he goes. Now God doth not for corruptions of doctrine, that are remote from the foundation, or of worship, in things ritual, and of an inferiour nature, cast off a Church, and with-draw his presence from it; neither ought we. Indeed, if the foundation of doctrine be destroyed, and the worship become idolatrous; in that case God goes before us, and calls all the faithful after him to come out from the communion of such a Church. But where corruptions in a Church are of the former nature, and such Laws be not imposed by the Church in their communion with it, as bring a necessity of approving things unlawful, the sin is not in holding communion with it, but in withdrawing from it, and that no little one neither. Many things must be tolerated for maintaining peace and unity, and enjoying the worship of God, when it is not in our power to redress them. Neither doth our presence at the Ordinance carrie interpretatively a consent with it of all that is there done. It is one thing to tolerate, and another to approve. Who ever said, that all who are present in an assembly, by it shew their consent to every impertinent phrase in the Ministers prayer, corrupt gloss, or false interpretation he makes of any Text quoted in his Sermon? If this were true, our Saviour led the people into a snare, when he bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees Doctrine, yet bade them hear them preach, *Math.* 23. 3.

SECT. III.

Use 3. Thirdly, of Exhortation. First, Make conscience of joyning with the Church in her publick worship. Do not think thou art left to thy libertie whether thou wilt or not, but bind it upon thy conscience as a duty, for so indeed it is. You think it is the Ministers duty to dispense Ordinances, surely then it is your duty to attend on them. He might as well pray for you at home, as come to Church and not find his people there. Is there a woe to him if he doth not provide food for your souls and none for you if you come not to partake of it? how can you reasonably think so? And when you come, think not you are time enough there, if you get to the Sermon, though you miss the Prayers, which should prepare you for the Word, and sanctifie the Word to you. It is not the way to profit by one Ordinance, to neglect another. The Minister may preach, but God must teach thee to profit. If God opens not thy understanding to conceive of, and thy heart to conceive by the word thou hearest, no fruit will come of it. Now Prayer is the key to open Gods heart, as his Spirit the key to open thine. *Secondly*, Take heed how thou comest to, and behavest thy self, as in other parts of publick worship; so especially in Prayer. *First*, How thou comest to publick worship; take heed thou comest not in thy filthiness, I mean, that thou regard not iniquitie in thy heart. Wash, and then pray; so *David* resolves; *I will wash*

wash my hands in innocency, and so compass thine altar, alluding to the Priests that went to the Laver before they approach'd with their sacrifice to the altar, *Exod. 40.* It was counted a great presumption in one, that he durst come near his Prince with a stinking breath; O what a bold act then is it to draw near to the great God with any sin upon thee? this is sure to make thy breath in Prayer stink, and render thee for it abominable to him. Secondly, How thou behavest thy self in thy duty, be sure it be with a holy reverence; First, with an inward reverence. God is called the Fear of his People, because he is revered by them in their approaches to him. Fear, it is put for the whole worship of God, because no part of it to be done without a holy trembling; this, as the Quaver to the Musick, gives a grace and acceptableness both to our Prayers and Praises also; *Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling.* Now to fill thee with awful thoughts of God, labour to set up a right Notion of God in thy mind, as infinitely glorious in Holiness, Majesty, and Power. Irreverence is the product of low thoughts we have of a person, which makes it impossible, that an ignorant soul should truly reverence God (how humble soever his outward posture is) because he knows not what God is. A Prince in disguise is not known, and therefore not entertained where he comes, as when he appears in his Royal Majesty. The Saints use to awe their hearts into a reverence of God in Prayer, by revolving his Titles of Majesty in their thoughts, *Psal. 89. 6.* Secondly, Outward reverence. God is a Spirit, yet will have

the reverence of our body as well as spirit, for both are his; and especially in the publick. A Prince would not like a rude behaviour from his servant in his Bed-chamber, where none besides himself is witness to it; but much less will he bear it in his Presence-chamber, as he sits on his Throne before many of his Subjects. Now the fittest gesture of body in publick Prayer to express our reverence, is kneeling, *Come let us worship, fall down, and kneel before the Lord, Psal. 95. 6.* So Paul taking his leave of the Elders of Ephesus, kneeled, and prayed with them all, *Act. 20. 36.* And all the Christians at Tyre accompanying Paul to the ship, with their wives and children, kneeled down on the shore, and prayed, *Act. 21.* where that cannot be done, they should stand (if debility of nature hinder not:) As for sitting, we do not find it commended in Scripture, as a praying posture; neither have the Churches of Christ judg'd it so: *Sedentem orare extra Disciplinam est, saith Tertullian,* To pray sitting, is not according to the Churches order: as for that, *2 Sam. 7. 18. David sate before the Lord;* It may be read, he abode or stay'd before Lord: So the word in other places is taken; as, *Gen. 27. 44. Levit. 44. 8. 1 Sam. 1. 22.* Thirdly, Attention and intention of mind, that they may go along with the Minister by their devout affections, and witness their consent to the prayers put up with their hearty Amen at the end of them, *1 Chron. 16. 36. Nehem. 8. 6. 1 Cor. 14. 16.* Or else indeed they are as a broken string in a Consort, that speaks not with the rest, and thereby discomposeth the Harmony.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of Extraordinary Prayer, its nature, and by whom to be performed.

THE last sort of Prayer (as to the manner of performing it) is *Extraordinary Prayer*; for the dispatch of which, I shall endeavour to answer these five Questions.

- First, What *Extraordinary Prayer* is?
- Secondly, By whom it is to be performed?
- Thirdly, What are the special Seasons wherein we are to take it up?
- Fourthly, Why *Extraordinary Prayer* is superadded to *Ordinary*?
- Fifthly, What counsel or direction may be given for the acceptable and successful performance of this duty?
- Quest. What is *Extraordinary Prayer*?

SECT. I.

Ans. Prayer may be called *Extraordinary* in a double respect: First, In regard of the time set apart for the performance of it; then it is extraordinary, when some more than ordinarie portion of time is set apart and devoted to this work. Thus we find Jacob wrestling till break of day, *Gen. 32.* and Joshua with the Elders of Israel till Even-tide; the one probably spending the night, the other the day

in this duty. And Israel (in their War with Benjamin) wept, and sate before the Lord that day till Even, *Judg. 20.* We find Daniel many dayes together in prayer, *Dan. 10. 12.* Secondly, in regard of its Adjunct. Then Prayer is *Extraordinary* when Fasting is joyned to the duty of Prayer; now Fasting is a Religious abstinence, whereby we forbear the use of all earthly comforts in the time set apart for this duty (so far as necessitie and decencie will permit) the more to afflict our souls, and enforce our prayers: As first, a forbearing of food, whether meat or drink, *Ezr. 4. 16. Jon. 3. 7.* from this, the whole action is called a Fast, which imports not a sober use of food, for this we are at all times bound to observe, but a total abstinence, if necessitie of nature through some debility and infirmities doth not require otherwise; for in this case, the less duty must yield to the greater: The end of fasting being to help us in prayer, which it doth not when nature faints under it; for the soul cannot flie, if the wings of our bodily spirits flag. Secondly, All costly apparel, and ornaments of the body, gaudy rich cloaths on a fast-day do no better, than a light trimming on a mourning suit, *Exod. 33. 4. They mourned, and no man put on his ornaments;* and this was by Gods own

command, *vers. 4. For the Lord had said to Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, that they put off their ornaments.* In a word, all carnal mirth, mufick, perfumes, and whatever might recreate and delight the senses, are to be forborn upon this extraordinary occasion. See *Dan. 6. 18. Dan. 10. 2, 3.* For though abstinence from food, with the other severities imposed on the outward man, be not in themselves acts of worship, nor intrinsecal to the nature of prayer, yet are they required in the extraordinary performance of this duty by way of adjuvancy to it, and they have a reference to spiritual ends. *First,* By this abstinence we acknowledge our unworthiness to enjoy such comforts, and that God may justly take from us, what for a time we voluntarily deny our selves of. *Secondly,* We express by our outward abstinence and fasting, the strength and vehemency of those inward affections which are to be exerted in extraordinary prayer. Men use to signify the violent passions of their soul, by forbearing the repast and delights of the body. Is it a passion of grief one is oppressed with? you will see him oft forsake his food; thus *David, Psal. 102. 4. My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.* Is it fear that possesseth the heart, with the apprehension of some great danger impending and approaching? you will have such a one refuse his wonted repast; so the Mariners did in the Sea-storm, *Act. 27.* Is it anger that vexeth a man? *Ahab* was deep in this passion upon the denial of *Naboth's* vineyard, and he throws himself on his bed, and will not eat, *1 King. 21.* Is it desire of compassing any great design that the head and heart is taken up and transported with? such a one will not allow himself time for his meal; *Cursed be he* (saith *Saul*) *that eateth any bread till evening, that I may be avenged of mine enemies, 1 Sam. 14. 24.* We find the *Smith* in the *Prophet* so earnest at his idolatrous work, that he pincheth himself with hunger, and he will not eat though his strength faileth, nor drink though he be ready to faint, *Isa. 44. 12.* Now in extraordinary Prayer, the Christian is to have all these affections in a spiritual and holy manner, wound up to the highest key possible; he is to have a deep sorrow for sin, fear and trembling at the judgments of God feared to come for them, an holy anger and indignation against sin, with a vehement desire to be revenged on it for the dishonour it hath cast upon God; and, in a word, a longing desire to make his peace with God, and recover his favour, which sin hath unhappily deprived him of. Now because the excess of natural passions discovers it self this way, even to afflict their very bodies, and makes them deny themselves that which nature most craves; therefore God will have his people in their extraordinary humiliations do the same, that nature may not put grace to shame. *Thirdly,* By this abstinence, especially from food, we tame and subdue our wanton flesh, and so come to have a greater advantage for mortifying those sensual lusts, that receive the fuel which feeds and inflames them from the flesh. A full body is a mellow soil for such lusts to grow rank in. *Con carne nutrimur vinis carnis;* The lusts of the flesh are nourished when the body is pampered. If the

body be kept high, carnal lusts will not easily be kept low. What else made *Paul* to beat down his body by fasting and watching, in which he was often? but that he might have the fuller blow at those lusts that received strength from it. *Nostrium est lascivius jumentum frans inedia subjugare, ut sessorem spiritum sanctum moderato & composito portet incessu, Hieronymus Epist. 9.* Indeed a pampered horse is most like to cast his Rider. And the Holy Spirit using the body as well as soul in the work, this bridle of fasting is of excellent use to curb it. *Fourthly,* This abstinence from food is required to sharpen our spirits, and enliven the powers of the soul in this duty, which are pressed down and thickened (as I may so say) with the charge of the stomach. A full body makes a heavy eye, and drowsie spirits, and what can then be expected but yawning prayers, especially when we are to continue longer than ordinary at the work?

S E C T. II.

Quest. 2. Who are they that are called to the practice of this duty of Extraordinary Prayer?

Ans. The command comprehends all that by age are enabled to understand the nature of this duty when any extraordinary occasion occurs for the performance of the same. We find it required of a Church and Nation. It is the *Magistrates* duty, when there is a National cause, to call his subjects to the publick practice of this duty, *Joel 2. 15. Neh. 9. 1.* and he that refuseth his call thereunto makes himself an offender both to God and man, *Levit. 23. 29.* It reacheth to private families, *Esther* and her *Maidens* keep a Religious fast together, *Esth. 4. 16.* yea it is a duty bound upon single persons, and reacheth to the secret closet, *Matth. 6. 16. But thou when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret.* The circumstances of the place shew, it is meant of a secret fast in the closet. We have them all together in one place, *Zech. 12. 12. The land shall mourn, there is a National fast; Every family apart, the house of David apart, and the house of Nathan apart, &c. there is Domestic; and their wives apart, there is a personal secret fast in the closet.*

Objct. But is not this extraordinary Prayer and Fasting too austere and rigid a duty for Gospel-times? Where doth Christ command his people in Gospel times to macerate their bodies with such severities as these? Joy and praise better becomes the freedom and liberty of the Gospel.

Ans. Such wild stuff hath been vented by some in our late loose times. These are a new sort of Saints, which the world hath hardly been acquainted with before these unhappy dayes of ours; they would be in heaven before their time, and leave no tears upon their cheeks for Christ at death to wipe away. If any of these could live without sin and suffering, they would have some colour for their plea; though even then, being yet in the body, they should owe those tears to their brethren, which they need not drop for

for themselves. The *Scripture* I am sure bids us weep with those that weep, and mourn with those that mourn. Thus did *Nehemiah* fast for his afflicted brethren in *Jerusalem*, when his own affairs were prosperous enough (being surrounded with the beams of the *Persian Emperours* favour.) But there are none in mortal flesh free from sin, or exempted from sorrow; and therefore a mourning habit may sometimes become the best of Saints on earth. They that wear soft clothing are in Kings houses, *Matth. 11. 8.* Glorified Saints who dwell in the King of Heavens Court, are always clad with joy, but this on earth is the Saints Holy-day suit; as he hath now and then his rejoycing days, so he wants not his days for mourning. The days will come (saith our Saviour of his Disciples) when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast, *Matth. 9. 15.* and surely they lived in Gospel-times. If these merry Professors had been by *Paul*, to see him how he beat down his body, and chastised himself with fasting, they surely would have chid him for his pains, and thought him ignorant of his Christian liberty. The worst I wish these poor deluded souls, is, that they who are so much for joy here, meet with no mourning in another world. It is but an ill sign, when men quarrel with a duty for its strictness, and slip the yoke off their necks because the wanton flesh saith it is uneasie. These are like *Ephraim*, whom the Prophet compares to an Heifer that loveth to tread the corn, but not to plough, that is hard hungry work. A thanksgiving day, that brings a feast with it, this they like, and are content it should pass for a Gospel-duty; but a day of prayer and fasting, wherein they are to pinch their carkase a little, this will not go down. But is there no feast except that which goes down the throat, and fills the belly? Certainly this blessed duty deserves not the ill name it hath given unto it by men of sensual spirits. It is indeed to carnal wretches a heavy yoke, a tedious work. As the *milk kine* that carried the *Ark* went

bellowing for their calves that were taken from them, so do these in a fast-day after their employments and enjoyments of the world, from which they are for that time restrained. Alas! poor creatures, as the *Ark* was nothing but a burthen to the kine, so the duty is no other to them. But the true Saint that knows what ease his poor heart feels in exonerating his conscience by humble confession of sin, what sweet satisfaction his soul meets with in communion with God, and what faith and inward peace he carries away with him from the duty, will give you another character of this Ordinance than so; he will tell you He had rather be fasting with God, than feasting at a Kings table. What Saint had not rather be fasting on the Mount with *Moses*, than eating and playing with the carnal *Israelites* below the hill? Who would not miss a meal for his body, to satiate his soul with those delights, that the presence of God in such an Ordinance affords? Who would not take pleasure in mourning and weeping for sin, to have the tears he sheds dried up with kisses from his Saviour's mouth? It is indeed to him that stands sucking of the bush (I mean the external part of the duty) a dry sapless service, but to him that is taken into the Wine-cellar, and there drinks full draughts of the love of God, it is a most sweet soul-ravishing Ordinance. The lower exterior part of the duty, like the bottom of *Jacobs Ladder*, stands on the earth, and leaves the creature on the earth also where it found him; for *bodily exercise profits little*. But the top and spiritual part of it reacheth to heaven, and mounts the gracious soul thither, even unto bosom-communion with God. There is as much difference between a Saint, and a hypocrite or carnal soul in this duty, as there is between a Thief lock'd up with his Keeper in a Prison, and a Scholar locking up himself in his Study, to read some book that he is greatly delighted with; to the one it is a grievous burden, to the other an incomparable pleasure.

CHAP. XLV.

The seasons for Extraordinary Prayer.

Quest. 3. What are the special seasons wherein the Christian is to take up the practice of this duty of Extraordinary Prayer?

Answer. I answer, first, in general, Any extraordinary occasion, as it emergeth in the course of Providence in the Christians life. This kind of prayer is not of constant use as ordinary prayer is; this is food, that physick, and it were absurd to be taking physick all the year long. Which shews the folly of the *Papists* in their fasts, which are holden at set times, whether affairs be prosperous or not prosperous, ordinary, or extraordinary. I would not be thought here to speak against set-Fasts, we have had our monthly Fasts, but the extraordinary cause for which they were appointed continued. But to instance in a few special seasons, wherein the Christian hath a fit occasion to make use of this extraordinary duty.

SECT. I.

First, When he is to set upon any more than an ordinary enterprize, wherein he may meet with great difficulty or danger, and the issue whereof will be a great mercy or affliction. Now is a fit season to take up this extraordinary duty, as an excellent means whereby all mountains of intervening difficulties may be levell'd, and his undertaking crowned with happy success. Thus *Esther*, before she adventured upon that heroick attempt of going un-*Esther* called into the King's presence, to beg the life of her People, given to the Butchery and slaughter by the Kings Seal at bloody *Haman's* request (an action that carried death and danger on the face of it) she first goes to God by fasting and prayer, and gets all the

the auxiliary forces of others prayers she can, and attended with this convoy, she, against the *Persian Law*, presents her self before the King, and speeds; for instead of losing her own life, which was forfeited by the Law for this attempt, she reverseth the unjust judgement past upon the life of her people, and recoyls it upon the head of him that laid the plot. Prayer had so unlock'd and opened the Kings heart, that she hath but what she asks at the Kings hands. No such Engine to facilitate and carry on any great design to its desired end, as this of extraordinary prayer. Who could have believed that *Ezra* and his company of pilgrims should all get safe from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*, being so generally hated every where? Now what stratagem doth this Leader of his people use to secure his passage, and 'scape the fury of his enemies? doth he desire a band of the *Persian King* to be their guard? No, he hath gloried so much of that God they served, that he is ashamed the King should think now he was not willing to cast himself upon his protection; but he goes to, fasting and prayer, *Ezr.* 8.21. then they take their march, and find the way all along cleared before them, *vers.* 31. Our blessed Saviour hath sanctified this duty for this end in his own holy example, who when to chuse and send forth the *Twelve* to preach the Gospel, that they may speed the better in their Embassy, he sends them forth under the conduct of prayer, and to that end spends the preceding night himself in prayer, *Luke* 6.12, 13. Now though every Christian is not called forth (or likely to be in all his life) to such great and publick enterprises as some others are, yet if he will observe the several passages of his more private employments, and turns of providence in the course of his life, he shall find many such actions occur, as give him a fair hint to make use of this duty. Haply thou art to enter upon a calling, or in the calling thou art, meetest with many difficulties and temptations. Thou hast a long journey, or dangerous voyage to take; thou hast to do with a subtle potent adversary, though thy cause be good, yet like to be out-witted or over-born. Here is a fair errand put in to thy mouth to go before the Lord for counsel, assistance, and protection. May be thou hast children, and these are to be disposed of into callings, or new relations; and is not this a great undertaking, wherein thou hast a great adventure going in their bottom? Will not the issue that depends upon this great change of their condition, lay the foundation of much grief or joy to thee? Yet how slighty are many herein, as if it were of little more importance to marry a child, than it is to put off a horse or cow at a fair? few matches are alas thus made in Heaven, I mean, by solemn prayer engaging God in the business. *Abraham's* servant puts many parents to shame, he hard at prayer for success in his journey, when sent to take a wife for his Masters son, and not they for their children. But I wonder not that they, who propound low and carnal ends to themselves in such enterprises, should forget by prayer both to ask his counsel in the match, or invite him to offer his blessing at the wedding.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, When the Christian is in the dark concerning any truth, and cannot satisfie his judgement by humble and diligent enquiry he hath made after it; now is a fit season to take up this extraordinary duty, as an excellent means to be led into the knowledge of the mind of God therein. Prayer is the proper key to unlock Gods heart, and he alone can open our understandings, and satisfie our scruples. This course *Daniel* took, and got more understanding by his fasting and prayer, than by all his study, for a messenger is sent from heaven to give him skill and understanding, *Dan.* 9. 20, 21, 22, 23. and again, *chap.* 10. 12. in both he sped: And the Angel is careful to let him know, that it was his extraordinary praying that procured this extraordinary favour, and also how acceptable his motion was, by the easie access, and quick dispatch it found with God; and therefore tells him in both, that he had no sooner set upon this course of afflicting his soul, but he was heard, and the messenger ordered to give him an answer to his prayer. Surely prayer hath not lost his credit in heaven, but is now as welcome to God as ever; and though an Angel be not the messenger to bring the Saint an answer, yet he shall have it by as sure and more honourable hand, even the holy spirit, whose office is to lead his people into truth. Thus *Cornelius*, *Act.* 10. came to be instructed in the mystery of the Gospel, upon his extraordinary seeking of God by fasting and prayer. It is very probable this good man in those divided times, wherein he saw many zealous for the old way of Jewish worship, and others preach up a new way, stood in some doubt what to do; and this might stir him up by fasting and prayer to ask counsel, and beg further light of God to direct him in the way of truth, as may seem by the tenor of the message sent him from God in the vision while he was at prayer, which bad him send to *Toppa* for one *Simon* whose name is *Peter*, and he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do, *vers.* 5, 6. And certainly in our divided times, wherein there is so much difference in judgement, had there been less wrangling among our selves, and more wrestling with God for his teaching Spirit, we had been in a fairer way to find the doore of truth, which so many are yet groping for. The way of controversies is dusty, and contentious disputes raiseth this dust, and blows it most into their eyes that gallop fastest in it, so that they miss the truth, which humble souls find upon their knees at the Throne of grace. When the *Apostles* were quarrelling, then they got nothing from Christ but a chiding, *Luke* 12. 14, &c. but when they were praying together earnestly, then he sent the Spirit to teach them, *Act.* 2.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, when the Christian is under any great affliction, Now is a fit season if he be able for the work: *Is any among you afflicted, let him pray, Jam.* 5. that is, let him then be more than ordinary in this

this duty; for he must, yea will, if a Christian, pray when he is not afflicted as well as when he is: but the meaning is, he must now pray after an extraordinary manner, he must now pray with more vehemency; for though in all our addresses to God, we are to express the lively workings of our hearts to God, without which, our prayers are unfavoury, (cold prayers ever find cold welcome.) Yet God expects, and it hath been always the care of holy men, in their extraordinary applications to this duty of prayer, to wind up their affections to a pitch higher than ordinary, having the advantage of some special occasion to help them thereunto. Look upon them in some great strait and affliction, and you shall find them exceeding themselves, and put upon them a Prince-like spirit; so Jacob behaved himself in prayer, *Gen. 32. 28.* as a Prince fighting in the field for his Crown and Kingdom, he wrestled with the Angel, who was no other than God himself; that is, he strained, as it were, every vein in his heart, and put forth his whole might in prayer, as a wrestler would do that grapples with a potent adversary. Moses is so transported in zeal for Israel, when a dismal cloud of wrath impended them for their idolatry, that he offers rather to dye upon the place, than to go down the Mount, and not carry the joyful news of a pardon with him, *Exod. 32. 32.* And Nehemiah, when he had been afflicting his soul, and praying before the Lord, it was with such vehemency, that the anguish of his spirit lookt out at his eyes, and left a mark of sorrow upon his very countenance, which his Prince could observe as he waited on him. Again, in affliction we are called to pray, as more intensively, so more extensively; I mean, longer and oftner. Thus I find that *intercessor* of our Saviour, rendred by *Lucas, Brugenius* and others, *prolixius orabat*, he prayed longer, that is, he spent more time than ordinary in it. Thrice one after another we find him at it, *Math. 26. 44.* His agony was great, and the waves of his affliction violent, and therefore he doubles, yea, trebles his prayer, with deep sighs and strong cries to his Father. Nature never strains so to its utmost, as when it is oppressed, then temples work, lungs heave, and heart pants; so in affliction the spirit of prayer should be encreased and intended.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, When the Christian is buffeted with any temptation, or over-powered with a corruption, and cannot with the use of ordinary means quench the one, or master and mortifie the other. If the short dagger of ordinary prayer will not reach the heart of a lust, then 'tis time to draw out this long sword of extraordinary prayer upon it. There is a kind of devils, our Saviour tells us, that goes not out but by prayer and fasting, *Math. 17. 21.* you know the occasion of this speech was that complaint of one concerning his Lunatick son, *I brought him to thy disciples and they could not cure him.* Thus some poor souls complain, they have come to the Word preached so long, in their daily prayers begg'd power over such a lust, resolved against it many a time, and

none of these means could cure it, what can they now do more? Here thou art told; bring thy condition to Christ in this solemn Ordinance of prayer and fasting, this hath at last been the happy means to strengthen many a poor Christian to be avenged on those spiritual enemies, which have out-braved all the former, and like *Sampson* to pull down the devils house upon his head.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, When sin doth abound more than ordinary in the times and places we live in. Sinning times have ever been the Saints praying times; this sent *Ezra* with a heavy heart to confess the sin of his people, and to bewail their abominations before the Lord, *Ezra. 9.* And *Jeremy* tells the wicked rout of his degererate age, that his soul should weep in secret for their pride, *Jer. 13.* Indeed sometimes sin comes to such a height and insolence, that this is almost all the godly can do, to get into a corner and bewail the general pollutions of the present age; as he told *Luther*, *Abi frater in cellam & dic miserere Domine. If the foundations of the earth be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Psal. 11.* Such dismal days of National confusion our eyes have seen, when foundations of Government were destroyed, and all hurl'd into a military confusion: When it is thus with a people, what can the righteous do? Yes, this they may, and should do, *Fast and pray.* There is yet a God in heaven to be sought to, when a peoples deliverance is thrown beyond the help of humane policy or power. Now is the fit time to make their appeal to God, as the words following hint, *vers. 4.* *The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lords throne is in heaven; in which words, God is presented sitting in Heaven as a Temple, for their encouragement (I conceive) in such a desperate state of affairs, to direct their prayers thither for deliverance. And certainly this hath been the engine that hath been above any instrumental, to scue up this poor Nation again, and set it upon the foundation of that lawful Government, from which it was so dangerously slid.*

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, to name no more, Times of great expectation are times for extraordinary prayer; when the people of God have been big with expectation of great mercies approaching, then have they been more abounding in prayer. As the Cocks crow thickest towards break of day, so the Saints, the nearer they have apprehended the accomplishment of promises made to his Church, the more instant they use to be in prayer. When a woman with child her reckoning is near out, then she desires her Midwife to be at hand. And prayer hath had the name of old for its excellent usefulness to obfetricate mercies; *the children are come to the birth*, (said good *Hezekiah*) and then he desires the help of the Prophets prayer for the safe delivery of it, *Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left, Isa. 57. 5.* When *Daniel* the Prophet had learn'd by study, that the happy period of the fe-

twenty years Captivity (bound upon the Jews neck for their sin) was now at hand, *Dan. 9. 1.* then in extraordinary manner he sets himself to pray, and afflict his soul before the Lord. And we have rea-

son to hope that spiritual Babylon (*Rome* I mean) is not long-lived, it is high time therefore that the Saints should fall more earnestly than ever to dig her grave for her by their prayers.

CHAP. XLVI.

Reasons why Extraordinary Prayer is to be super-added to Ordinary.

Quest. 4. BUT why is extraordinary prayer to be super-added by the Christian to his ordinary exercise of it in his daily course?

Ans. First, In obedience to the command of God; He commands not only we should pray always, but with all prayer also; and extraordinary prayer is one kind among the rest, and let none of us say, is it not enough to pray once or twice every day, but we must upon some occasions devote a whole day also, to the damage of calling and family? O what niggards would some be towards God, were they left free to devote what time they thought fit for his worship? This cavil sounds too like that of *Judas*, To what purpose is this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor, *Matth. 26.* But this he said, not that he loved the poor, but because he was a thief. Truly so, when I hear some carnal wretches cry out against this waste of time in praying and fasting; how much might the improvement of that time, if laid out in their callings, have advantaged their families, wives and children? I am ready to think, it is not because they have such a care of their relations as they pretend; for they who grutch a day for prayer, can throw some of them many away at the ale-house or in idleness; but they carry thievish hearts in their bosoms, which love to rob God of his due, and care not how little service they put him off with. Is he a loyal Subject that pays the ordinary Tribute to his Prince, but if occasion of State requires a Subsidy, this he refuseth, or doth it grudgingly? Gods commands are none of them, no not this which carries some outward severity on it, so grievous, that any should need to groan or grumble under them. Those yokes (duties and commands I mean) whose out-side seem most hard, have the softest lining within: What seems harder than suffering? and yet when are Saints fuller of Heavens joy? What duty more austere than this of fasting and afflicting our souls? and yet in the breast of this Lyon, that scares sensual wretches, the Christian finds the sweetest honey-comb of inward comforts. Temple-work is sure to be well paid, if well done; though it be never so little work in his house, God will not have it done gratis, none shall kindle a fire on his Altar for nought; and therefore he takes it in great disdain at their hands, who *Mal. 3. 14.* durst say, What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? whereas the fault was not in the duty, but in themselves, that they got no more by it: As if a naughty servant should bring himself by his ryor and excess to poverty, and then give out a hard master hath undone him.

Secondly, To comport with the providence of God, by a suitable return of duty to his actings and dispensations towards us. When God is extraordinary in his Providence, he expects his people should be more than ordinary in seeking of him; what else means that of the Prophet? *Thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, Amos 4. 12.* Here God alarms them by his extraordinary proceedings intended against them, to take the hint of this warning, and apply themselves speedily to the solemn practice of repentance, and humbling of their souls, as a suitable posture to meet God in, and keep off the storm of his wrath now gathering against them. Is it not high time for a Nation to betake them to their defensive arms, when a mighty Host is marching against them? So *Isa. 26. 20, 21.* Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, &c. Here he sends his people to their chambers and closets, that they may by afflicting their souls and fervent Prayers, find a hiding in the day of his indignation; and why must they do thus? *verse 21.* For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The rising of God out of his place imports some notable enterprize he is about to do; and when the Master riseth, it is not manners for the servant to sit still, but to rise also, and prepare to follow him where he goes. God takes special notice how we behave our selves, and comport with his dispensations of judgement or mercy, *Isa. 22. 12.* In that day the Lord called to weeping and mourning; that is, he called them by the voice of his Providence as well as his Prophets, the nature of which was such, that had not their lust bung'd up their ears, and made them deaf, they could not but hear and understand, that now was the time, if ever, that God expected to see them in sackcloth and tears, humbling their souls before him. Now see how heinously he takes their security and prophane slighting of his providence, *vers. 14.* And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord of Hosts. Few sins more provoke God than this, *Psal. 28. 5.* Because they regard not the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. So *Dan. 5. 22.* And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy self, though thou knewest all this, this lost him his life and Kingdom, as the contrary saved *Ahab's* for a time, though it was not so sincere as it ought; a temporal humiliation got him a temporal benefit.

Thirdly, For the great influence that this extraordinary duty solemnly performed would have upon our

our whole life and course of godliness. To keep the body healthful, requires not only daily food, but now and then physick also; for in the soundest constitution, and that advantaged with the best care and temperance, there will in time such a quantity of superfluous humors gather, that nature without help cannot digest: And truly the temper of the soul is as infirm, and needs as much tending as doth the body. Ordinary prayer is the Saints food, he can as little miss the constant returns of it as his usual meals. But extraordinary is his physick, to clear and discharge the soul of those distempers which it contracts, and cannot conquer by the use of ordinary means; as also to advance and heighten the Christians graces

unto a further degree of strength and activity. As God hath in his wise providence ordered one Star of great influence to be at a certain season of the year in conjunction with the Sun, for the more effectual ripening the harvest in these colder parts of the world; so hath he in the same wisdom appointed for the Christians spiritual advantage and help, in this cold climate of the world, that this solemn duty should now and then be taken into conjunction with our ordinary exercise of devotion: for want of which it is, that many ripen slower both in their graces and comforts than some of their fellow-Saints, who sit often under the influences of this powerful quickning Ordinance.

CHAP. XLVII.

Directions towards the holy performing this solemn duty of Extraordinary Prayer.

Quest. 5. What counsel or direction may be given to the acceptable and successful performance of this solemn duty?

Ans. I come now to shut up my discourse on this point, in answering this last Question; a serious necessary one it is, for indeed it is an edge-tool, of excellent use, but dangerous in his hand that knows not how to use it, like some physick, if it doth not purge it poisons. In the same fat soil, where the corn is best, the weeds also are rankest. Neither grace nor sin grow to such a height any where, as in those that converse much with this solemn Ordinance. And therefore as they who are in a ship upon a swift stream, had need the more look to the steerage of it, because they will be carry'd amain either to their port or wrack; so have they reason to be very careful in the managing of this service, the issue whereof cannot be ordinary, because the duty is extraordinary. Now the counsel or direction to be given must necessarily be divided into these three general heads; something would be directed as preparatory, before this undertaking; something to be observed in the performance, and also after the dispatch of it. The City cannot be safe, unless the whole line be kept, it is all one whether the enemy breaks in at the front, flank, or rear of an Army; or whether the ship be taken at sea, or sink in the haven when the voyage is over.

First, Some preparatory direction before the duty. Now there is a double preparation requisite, the one more remote, the other immediate; or, if you please, habitual preparation and actual.

There is a remote and habitual preparation, of great use to the performance of this solemn duty, and it lies in this, To look (Christian) that thou shewest a conscionable care in thy daily walking, and the constant exercise of this duty in thy ordinary daily offices of devotion, or else thou art like to make but bad work when thou comest to engage in the extraordinary.

First, Thy neglect in the ordinary duty will exceedingly indispose thee for the extraordinary.

Who would take a foggy horse out of the pasture to run a race? In extraordinary prayer, the soul is to be put on her full speed, all its powers to be strained to their utmost ability, and to continue long in the work also; Is he fit for so swift and long a race, whose soul is not kept in breath by the daily exercise of ordinary prayer, but lets his graces, if he hath any, be choak'd up with sloth or formality? The more any member is used, the stronger it is; The right-hand, which our working-hand, hath more activity than the left that is used less. A weakness will certainly invade the powers of thy lazy soul, which though thou perceivest not as thou sittest in thy chair of sloth, will appear when thou risest, and thinkest to go forth in any solemn duty, as thou wert wont to do; then thou wilt find with *Sampson*, that thou hast lost thy strength in the lap of sloth and negligence. As fasting is too strong for new bottles, so it is too sweet wine for to be put into fusty and mouldy ones: now the only way to keep a bottle or cask sweet, is not to let it stand long empty without any liquor in it.

Secondly, As it will indispose thee for this solemn duty, so it is a bad symptom concerning thy spiritual state it self, which is worse than the former. Grace works uniformly, and discovers a comely proportion in its actings. Haply you may see the son of a Prince on some high day, in richer and more glorious apparel than on another day that is ordinary; but you shall never find him in fordid, ragged, and beggarly cloaths, still he will be clad as becomes a Kings son. Possibly, yea, 'tis likely, that you may see the Christian come forth in an extraordinary day and duty, with more enlargement of affections in prayer, and all his graces raised to a higher glory in their actings than ordinary; but you shall never find him with his robe of grace laid aside, still the true Saint will declare his high birth by his every day course, he will not live in the neglect of ordinary duties, and cast off communion with God in his daily walking. O 'tis the brand of an hypocrite to have his devotion come by fits, and like a

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drift of snow, to lie thick in one place and none in another; to seem for zeal like Angels at a time, and live like Atheists many weeks after. Surely grace acts more evenly, and is never so unlike itself. It is ill living in that Misers house, who hath never any good meat on his table but when he makes a feast, and that is very seldom; or with him that upon an occasion hath a day of prayer, but starves himself and family, or pinches them in their daily fare. Well, never think of meddling with this extraordinary duty, till thou inurest thy self to the ordinary exercise of prayer, and takest more care in thy daily walking with God.

Secondly, There is a more close and immediate preparation required, and this I called actual preparation. 'Tis true indeed, he that is conscientious and careful in the ordinary exercises of Religion, hath a great advantage of him that either neglects them, or is loose in them, for his heart must needs stand in a nearer disposition to this extraordinary service than the other: As he that is up and hath his clothes on, is more ready to go on his Masters errand, than he that is asleep in his bed. Yet besides this care in our daily walking, there needs some further pains to be taken with his heart, to raise him unto such a frame, as may comport with this solemn service. The neat house-wife, though she endeavours always to keep her house clean, yet against some good time (as they call it) she is more than ordinary curious in walking her rooms, and scouring her vessels, that they may not only be clean, but bright; and so should the Christian. Now is the time for thee to scour off the dust thou contractest in thy daily course, and to brighten thy graces unto a further glory than appears in thy everyday walking, to do which, will cost pains, and require time. The Christian is like some heavy Birds, as the *Bustard* and others, that cannot get upon the wing without a run of a furlong or two, or a great Bell that takes some time to the

raising of it. Now Meditation is the great instrument thou art to use in this preparatory work, allow thy self some considerable portion of time before the day of extraordinary prayer for thy retirement, wherein thou may'st converse most privately with thy own heart; this cannot be done in a crowd, neither must it be left to the time of engaging in the extraordinary duty, we cannot do both duties together; the Husbandman cannot whet his sythe and cut the grass at once. Betake thy self therefore to thy closet, and in the first place call thy thoughts off the World, and as much as is possible, clear thy soul of all that is foreign to the work thou art about; this is as the wiping of the Table-book before we can write any thing well on it. Now the more effectually to gather in thy heart to a holy seriousness, and compact thy thoughts together, it were expedient for thee at first to lay before thee the grand importance of the approaching service: Thou art going to stand before the great God, and that very near in an extraordinary duty, wherein thou wilt either falsifie or prophane his Reverend Name in a high degree, and accordingly art to expect his love or wrath in some choice blessing or dreadful curse, to be the issue and result of thy undertaking; gird the loins of thy mind with some such awful apprehensions as these. As natural fear makes the spirits retire from the outward parts of the body to the heart, so this holy fear of miscarriage in so solemn a duty, would be a means to call thy thoughts from all exterior carnal objects, and fix them upon the duty in hand. *Psal. 5. 7. In thy fear will I worship.* Such will the print on the Wax be, as the Sculpture is on the Seal; if the fear of God be deeply engraven on thy heart, there is no doubt but it will make a suitable impression on the duty thou performest. Well, now the Court is set, and silence commanded, a few particulars I shall propound for thy thoughts to go upon in this preparatory work.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Examination of our hearts about the end we propound in this undertaking, very necessary.

First, Examine thy soul, what end thou propoundest to thy self in the intended service of extraordinary prayer, none but a child or a fool will run before he knows what is his errand. The end is that which a wise man looks to before he sets his hand to any work; and the more weighty the enterprize is, the more necessary this is. First, Consider, if the end thou propoundest be evil, the duty cannot be good, because thy heart is not sincere in it. The sincerity of the heart discovers it self in the mark it sets up, and end it aims at in a duty, not in the external performance of it. The thief and the honest traveller may be found riding in the same road, but they have different aims therein, and this distinguisheth them. Thus the Saint and hypocrite joyn in the same duty, shoot as it were in the same Bow, but their eye takes not the same aim, and therefore their Arrows meet not in the same Butt. The prayers of the one are rejected as abominable, and the other graciously accepted. Who more seemingly devout than the captive Jews, that kept up a Fast for seventy years together? yet God gives them but little thanks for their pains, because their end was not right, *Zech. 7. 5. When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?* The faster a man gallops if he be out of his way, it is the worse. Zeal is the best or worst thing in a duty; if the end be right, 'Tis excellent! but if wrong, stark naught; and it is no easie thing to propound a right end. The eye must be set right in the head, before it can look right. If the piece be wrong made, it will never carry the bullet streight to the mark. A false heart (and every carnal heart is such) cannot have a true end. Secondly, consider, That your endeavour in the duty will bear proportion, and be commensurate to the end you propound therein; if your end be low, your endeavour will be no more than to reach that end; as he that intends to build a little Cottage, contents himself with ordinary stuff, clay and thatch; but he that designs some stately Palace, provides more precious materials. Thus David was very curious in the materials he laid aside for the Temple, *For the Palace* (saith he) *is not for man, but the Lord God; therefore he prepared with all his might Gold and Silver, &c.* 1 Chron. 29. 1, 2, 3. The hypocrites ends in a fast are low and base, his credit with men, carnal profit & the like; accordingly his endeavour is laid out on the external part of the duty, a demure countenance, devout posture, and such expressions in prayer as may most take with those that hear him, and this is all he looks at; but the gracious soul faith with David, This Palace I build, this duty I perform, is not for man, but for the Lord God, and therefore his chief care is to provide more precious materials, a broken heart for sin in his confessions, faith and fervency in

his petitions, love and thankfulness in his acknowledgements of mercies received. ✓

Quest. But when is an evil end propounded in this duty?

Ans. The end we propound may be evil, either intrinsically, when the thing we aim at is evil in its own nature, or else from some irregularity in placing it too high or low in our aim.

First, The ends that are intrinsically evil, to name two, first, When a person or a people shall fast and pray, to cover and more slightly carry on any wicked enterprize; This is a horrid evil, a monstrous abomination: What is this but to hang out the sign of an Angel at the door, that they may play the Devil within the less suspected? Yet such deep hypocrisy hath the heart of man discovered, that it dare come and lay its Cockatrice egg under the very wing of God, and make use of this his solemn Ordinance, as an expedient to hatch their wicked designs. The Fox, they say, when hard put to it, will to save himself, fall in among the dogs, and hunt among them as one of the company. Thus the hypocrite, the better to conceal his wicked projects, will run among the Saints, and make as loud a cry in this duty and others, as the best of them all. It is the Devils old trick, and he hath learnt it his instruments, to wrap up wicked plots in the gilded covers of Gods Ordinances. What plotting and counterplotting was there between Sechem the son of Hamor, and Simeon and Levi? and the expedient which both used to accomplish their designs was an Ordinance of God; the one hopes by submitting to it, to hook into his hands the whole estate of Jacob's family, *Shall not their substance be ours?* and the other persuade them to it, that when they were sore they might butcher them without resistance. Absalom, that he may the better play the Traitor against his father, begs leave to pay his vow at Hebron. Jezebel sets her trap for Naboth, and that he may the more surely fall into her clutches, she croucheth and humbleth her self even before God in a fast. And the demure Pharisee, who bragged so much of his fasting, our Saviour was bold to tell them, it was to devour the widows houses; but as the Father hath it, *Manducant in terris quod apud inferos digerunt*, They devour on earth those morsels that will lie heavy on their stomachs in Hell to be digesting to eternity. Thus the hypocrite, like Amichrist, lies in the Temple of God, and there commits his execrable abominations, turning a house of prayer into a den of thieves. O tremble at this great wickedness! It gives a crimson tincture to a sin, when it is committed under the disguise of Religion. Secondly, when a person thinks by fasting and prayer to satisfy God for his sin, or merit any favour at the hands of God; this is wicked and abominable, and as contrary to the nature of prayer as buying is to begging. The

power (saith Solomon) *useth entreaties*, Prov. 18. 23. we do not use to pay and pray too. When Job resolves on prayer, he renounceth any plea taken from his own righteousness, *Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge*, Job 9. 15. We cannot have the benefit of the throne of grace, till we quit our legal plea. Christ indeed pleads as righteous, and therefore desires what he asks for us as just, because he hath paid for it; but we pray as sinners, and therefore crave all as mercy; yea, though we plead Christs merit, because he is the greatest and freest gift of all other. Yet such is the pride of mans heart, that he had rather play the Merchant, and truck his duties for Gods blessings, than be thought to receive them gratis. This was the temper of the carnal Jews, they thought to pacifie God for their sin, as Jacob his angry brother, with the droves and flocks of duties, which they presented him with, and thought their services undervalued when they were not accepted for good payment; hence their bold expostulating the case with the Lord, *Wherefore have we fasted and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?* Isa. 58. 3. such a high opinion they had of themselves. O take heed of this, pride turns an Ordinance into an Idol. God accepts our fasts and prayers, when used for humiliation, but abhors them when we bring them for our justification. The Pharisee lost himself by his proud brags, how oft he fasted, while the poor Publican got the prize by humble confession of his sin, Luk. 18. He that thinks to wash his face with puddle water, instead of making it clean will leave it fouler; truly our best tears are not over-clean, and can they make us clean that need themselves to be washed? Holy Job durst not rely on his purity, *If I wash my self with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloaths shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in Judgement*, Job 9. 30, 31, 32.

Secondly, The end may be, though not intrinsically evil, yet evil from some irregularity in misplacing it, as when we make that our ultimate end, which should only be our subordinate end in the duty. That which would be lawful standing in its proper place, becomes sinful when the ultimate end is crowded down to make room for that. The glory of God is to be the ultimate end, not only in every duty of Worship, but in all common actions also, even to eating and drinking, those low actions are to be elevated to this high end, 1 Cor. 10. 31. and good reason he should be our utmost end, from whom we received our beginning; *all things are of him*, and therefore fit they should be to him; the River-water empties it self into the bosom of the Sea, from whence it flows. Now if we are to have so high an end in our lowest actions, then surely in our highest, and such are acts of worship, in which we have immediately to do with God, and are thence called *Priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. There is indeed another end also for which Ordinances are

appointed, viz. to be conduit-pipes for conveying all kind of blessings from God unto us; but this is an inferior end, and to be subordinated to the former, or else we make the glory of God an underling to our particular good, which God will not endure. Possibly we are in some great affliction, this sets us to prayer for deliverance, thus far we keep our way; but then we turn aside, when our deliverance is more regarded by us than his glory, this is to set the subject in his Princes chair, *Deo, ut fruamur mundo*, to make use of God, that we may enjoy the creature. Beware of this. Whatever we prefer in our desires above the glory of God, is an idol-worship by us. The heart can engrave as well as the hand, and an idol in the heart is as bad as one set up in the house.

Quest. But how may I find whether the glory of God, or the particular good thing I pray for, be that which I make my chief end in duty?

Ans. It may be discovered two ways; First, By thy carriage in prayer. Secondly, After prayer.

First, By the carriage of thy heart in duty; if the glory of God be chiefly aimed at by thee, this will give a tincture to the whole duty, and be influential into every part of it; thou wilt suit thy requests to this end. For as there is a secret force from the arm (that draws the bow) impressed on the arrow, which carries it to the mark aimed at by the shooter; so there is a secret power which carries the soul out in duty, to act suitably to the end he chiefly propounds, and desires to obtain; for no man would willingly obstruct and hinder what above all he wisheth for. We will suppose, pardon of sin is the mercy thou prayest for; now if thou desirest sincerely the glory of God as well as his mercy, yea, above it, this will direct thee in thy confession of sin, to afflict thy soul more for the dishonour thou hast by it reflected on God, than the wrath thou hast incurred thy self. So in thy petition, thou dardest not beg thy pardon on terms that were dishonourable for God to give it on, but wilt desire the mercy in such a way, as his glory may be both secured and advanced. Now God cannot pardon the sin of an impenitent wretch, that holds still the love and liking of his lust, without infinite wrong to his glorious Name. And therefore if his glory be so high in thy eye as thou sayest, thou wilt cry as earnestly for his sanctifying grace, as for pardoning mercy, and not merely because thou canst not have pardon without it (as a sick man desires a bitter potion to save his life, not that he loves it) but because by it thou shalt be fitted to glorifie him.

Secondly, It may be discovered by thy carriage after duty, and that in two particulars: First, When the mercy prayed for is obtain'd. If thou didst chiefly aim at the glory of God in begging it, thy chief care will be to lay it out for his glory now thou hast it: whereas he that aimed at himself in praying for it, will as little regard God in the using of it, as he did in begging it. It is natural for things to resolve into their principles. The child that *Hanna* obtained of God, she dedicates unto the Lord, and why? but because this was her end in praying

praying for him, 1 Sam. 1. 11. compared with 28. When *David's* prayer is heard, and he delivered, mark what his resolve from this is, *I will walk before God in the Land of the living*, Psal. 116. 9. and again, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds*, vers. 16. He returns the mercy to God, by improving it for him in a holy life: How can we think he aimed at the glory of God in praying for health, that runs away from God as soon as he is set upon his legs? or in praying for wealth, that lays it out upon his lusts? Secondly, When the thing prayed for is denied. He that aims sincerely at Gods glory in prayer for a mercy (I speak now of such mercies as are but conditionally promised) he will cheerfully submit to the will of God in a denial thereof, because God can in such petitions glorifie himself, by denying as well as granting them. *David* prayed and fasted for the life of his sick child, it dies notwithstanding; now does this denial make him fall out with God? is he clamorous and discontent? No, it raiseth no storm in his heart, or lowering weather in his countenance to hinder him in the service of God; he washeth his tears from his blubber'd cheeks, changes his apparel, and goes cheerfully into the house of God and worshippeth, 2 Sam. 12. 20. so powerfully did the will of God determine his will. Thus as the heavenly bodies are by the *primum mobile* carried contrary to their particular inclination, so grace in a Saint over-rules his natural affection, and carries him into a compliance with the will of God when it crosseth his own. Our blessed Saviour had natural affections, which made him pray the bitter cup of his passion might, if possible, pass from him; yet not so, but he was willing to take a denial, and therefore desires his Father to glorifie himself, though it were by taking away his life, Joh. 12. 27, 28.

Secondly, The second thing thou art to do, having fix'd thy end right, is to make a privy search into thy heart and life, whereby thou maist be enabled more fully and feelingly to lay open thy condition before the Lord. Now there are three heads of enquiry thou art to go upon: *First*, For the sins thou hast committed. *Secondly*, For the mercies thou hast received. *Thirdly*, For the wants thou liest under.

First, For the sins thou hast committed. The great business of a fast lies in the practice of repentance, and this cannot be done without a narrow scrutiny of the heart: *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord*, Lam. 3. 40. The Thief must be found before he can be tried, and tried before he is condemned and executed. Some sins no doubt may be taken and apprehended with little pains, but if thou beest true to God and thy own soul, thou wouldst not willingly let any of the company escape. How canst thou expect pardon for any, that desirest not justice on all? and how canst thou say, thou desirest justice on those sins, which thou endeavourest not to apprehend? That Constable that having a hue and cry brought him for a pack of Thieves, and lets any get away rather than he will rise to search for them, shews his zeal to justice is little. I do not say, thou wilt be able to find all, it is enough if by thy diligence thou givest proof of thy sincerity, that thou wouldst

not conceal any. Set thy self therefore in good earnest to the work; beset thy heart and life round, as men would do a wood where murderers are lodg'd; hunt back to the several stages of thy life, youth, and riper years, all the capacities and relations thou hast stood in; thy calling general and particular, every place where thou hast lived, and thy behaviour in them. Bid memory bring in its old records, and read over what passages are there written; call conscience in to depose what it knows concerning thee, and encourage it to speak freely without mincing the matter. And take heed thou dost not snib this witness, as some corrupt Judges use, when they would favour a bad cause or give it secret instructions, as *David* did *Joab*, to deal gently with thee. Be willing to have thy condition opened fully, and all thy coverings turn'd up; for many times foul designs are hid with faire pretences. As the Barrels of powder in the *Parliament Cellar* under coles and billets. Now when thou hast gone as far as thou canst, begging Heavens help in the thing to search and try thee, whether there be any further wickedness that thou hast not found out, then burden thy soul, judge thy self for them with all the brokenness of heart thou canst get, justifying God in the sentence denounced against thee for them. God will have thee lay thy neck on the block, though he means not to give the stroak. In a word, Labour in thy meditations to give every sin its due accent, and suffer thy thoughts to dwell on them, till thou findest the fire of thy indignation kindle in thy heart against them, yea, flame forth into such a holy zeal against them, as makes thee put thy self under an oath to endeavour their utter ruine and destruction. Then thou art fit to beg thy own life, when thou hast vow'd the death of thy sins.

Secondly, Mercy received. Thou hast these (at least the most signal instances of them) upon the file, unless thou beest a very bad husband for thy soul. If God thinks fit to bottle his Saints tears, they surely should not forget to book his mercies. Now there are some special seasons, wherein the Saint should take down this Chronicle of Gods mercies, to read in it; and this is one, when he is to engage in this extraordinary duty, *First*, as the most effectual means to melt his heart for sin. Mercy gives the greatest aggravation to sin, and therefore must needs be the most powerful instrument to break the heart for sin: With this God doth reproach sinning *Israel*, *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise*, Deut. 32. 6. they could not have been evil to such a height, if God had not been so good to them. When God would break the fore of his peoples sin, he compounds a poultis with his choicest mercies, and lays this warm to their hearts. *David* had sate many months under the Lectures of the Law, unhumbl'd for his bloody complicated sin; but *Nathan* is sent to preach a rehearal Sermon to him of the many mercies that God had graced him with, and while these coals are pouring on his head, his heart dissolves presently, 2 Sam. 12. The frost seldom is quite out of the earth, till the Sun hath got some power in the spring to dissolve its bands; but then it sets it going: Neither will the hardness of the heart be to any purpose removed, until the soul be thoroughly warmed with

with the sense of Gods mercies. *Ezek. 20: 43. There shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled, and ye shall loath your selves in your own sight.* Where is that there? but when amidst the thoughts of his mercies, as by the context is manifest. A pardon from the Prince hath made some weep, whom the sight of the block and axe could not move. Sight of wrath inflames the conscience, but sense of mercy kindly melts the heart, and overcomes the will. *Secondly*, as a necessary ingredient in all our prayers, *Let your requests be made known with thanksgiving, Phil. 4.* This spice must be in all our offerings. He that prays for mercy he wants, and is not thankful for mercies received, he may seem mindful of himself, but he is forgetful of God, and so takes the right course to shut his prayers out of doors. God will not put his mercies into a rent purse, and such is an unthankful heart, for it drops them soon out of his memory.

Thirdly, Thy wants. Before the Tradesman goes to the Fair, he looks over his shop, that he may know what commodity he most lacks. Thou goest to this duty to furnish thy self with the graces and mercies thou needest, is it not necessary then to see what thy present store is? what thy personal and what thy relational needs are? not forgetting the publick, in whose peace and happiness thou art so much concerned; for if this Ship sink, thou canst not be safe in thy private cabin. To leave all these to occur and overtake thee, without charging thy thoughts with them by previous meditation, is too high a presumption for a sober Christian to take up. Besides, thy affections need help, as well as thy memory; nay, we may sooner bring our sins and wants to mind, than lay them to heart; it is easier to know them, than knowing them to be deeply affected with them: and we do not come in prayer to tell God a bare story of these things, but feelingly and affectionately to make our

moan and complaint, with deep sighs and groans to him, that can pardon the one, and relieve us in the other.

Thirdly, When thou hast upon this scrutiny kindled thy affections, with the bellows of meditation, into a deep sense of these things, then furnish thy self with Arguments from the Promises to enforce thy prayers, and make them prevalent with God. The promises are the ground of faith, and faith when strengthened will make thee fervent, and such fervency ever speeds, and returns with victory out of the field of prayer: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Jam. 5.* Words in prayer are but as powder, the promise is the bullet that doth the execution, faith the grace that chargeth the soul with it, and fervency that gives fire and dischargeth it into Gods bosom, with such a force, that the Almighty cannot deny it entrance, because indeed he will not. Now as he is an imprudent Souldier that leaves his bullets to be cast, or fitted to the bore of his piece, till he comes into the field; so he an unwise Christian that doth not provide and fort promises suitable to his condition and request, before he engageth in so solemn a service. *Daniel* first searcheth out the promise, what God had engaged himself to do for his people, as also when the date of this promise expired; and when by meditation and study upon it he had raised his heart to a firm belief thereof, then he sets upon God with a holy violence in prayer, and presseth him close, not only as a merciful God, but righteous also, to remember them now the bond of his promise was coming out, *O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy City Jerusalem, &c. Dan. 9. 16.* The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer.

CHAP. XLIX.

Directions to be observed in, and after the Duty. X+

Direct. 2. **H**AVING dispatch'd the preparatory directions, now I come to those that are to be observed in the duty it self; and because those will serve for this purpose which are given in another place for the duty of prayer in general, I shall name but a few, and those briefly.

SECT. I.

First, When the time to engage thy self in this extraordinary duty is come, beware thou settest not upon it in the confidence of thy preparation, whatever thy care or success therein hath been. What a worthy *Doctor* directed Ministers, as to their preaching, is applicable to Christians as to their praying; He bade them study for their Sermons as if they expected no divine assistance in the Pulpit; and when they came into the Pulpit, to cast themselves upon divine assistance as if they had not studied at all. Thus prepare before thou comest to fast and pray, as if thou wert to meet no further assistance in the duty; but when thou comest to the performance of the duty, cast thy self wholly upon divine assistance, as if thou hadst not at all prepared. I know not which of the two doth worst, he that presumes upon Gods assistance in this great work without preparation, or he that presumes on his preparation, and relies not after he hath done his best endeavour, on the gracious assistance of God. The first shews he hath but mean thoughts of this solemn Ordinance, yea, low and unworthy thoughts of the great God, with whom he hath to do in it; and the other too high thoughts of himself. What though now, Christian, thou marchest in goodly array, and thy heart in order, how soon alas may all thy preparations be routed, and thy chariot wheels, which thou hast taken so much pains to oyl, be set fast, or knock'd off? Now thy thoughts are united, thou thinkest, dost thou know where they will be a few minutes hence, if thy God help thee not to keep them together? Thou canst as easily hold the four winds in a bag, as keep the thoughts of thy fluid mind from gadding. Now thy affections are wound up to some height, but canst thou hold the peggs from slipping? Cannot God wither thy hand while thou stretchest it out in prayer, make thy tongue faulter when thou wouldst make use of it, yea, suffer a sudden damp to fall upon thy spirit that shall chill all thy affections, and leave thy heart as cold as a stone in thy bosom? Surely man at his best estate is vanity. And this in regard of the temper of his spirit, as well as in the constitution of his body, and other his worldly advantages. How oft do we see the gifts of his mind, and the vivacity of his graces, fade and wither in one duty? which at another, when the Spirit of God vouchsafed his gentle breath to

quicken them, did flourish, and send forth their fragrant spices in abundance? O do not then applaud thy self in thy gourd, which may so soon be smitten; neither commit so great an adventure as the success of this duty is, in the leaking bottom of thy own preparation.

Secondly, Pray often rather than very long at a time. It is hard to be very long in prayer, and not slacken in our affections. Those watches which are made to go longer than ordinary at one winding, do commonly lose towards the end. The flesh is weak, and if the spirits of the body tire, the soul that rideth on this beast must needs be cast behind. Our Saviour when he prayed for his life, we find him praying rather often than long at once. He who in a long journey lights often to let his beast take breath, and then mounts upon him again, will get to his journey's end may be sooner, than he that puts him beyond his strength. Especially observe this in social prayers, for when we pray in company, we must consider them that travail with us in the duty; as *Jacob* said, *I will lead on softly as the children are able to endure*. Yet I speak not this that you should give any check to the Spirit of God in his assistances, which sometime come so strong, that the Christian is, as it were, carried with a full fore-wind, and hath the labour of tugging at the Oar saved him, the ship of the soul goes with most facility when with most speed; such assistances lift both the person praying, and those that joyn with him (if gracious and under the same quicknings) in a manner above all weariness. The Spirit brings spirits (affections I mean) with him. Such a soul is like a vessel that runs full and fresh, what pours from him is quick and spiritul; whereas at another time, when the Spirit of God denies these assistances, his prayer tastes flat to his own palate, if not to others.

Thirdly, Be very careful to approve thy self faithful in the soul-humbling work of the day; let thy confessions be free and full, the sense thou hast of thy sins be deep, and thy sorrow for them sincere and Evangelical; for as thou quittest thy self in this, so thou wilt be in all the other parts of the duty: If thou confessest sin feelingly, thou wilt pray against it fervently; If thy sorrow be deep, and reach to thy very heart and spirit, then thy petitions for pardoning mercy, and purging grace, will also come from the heart, be cordial, warm, and vehement. Whereas he that melts not in confession of sin, will freeze in his prayers that he puts up against it, if his tears be false and whorish, *lachryme mentiri docta*, his desires cannot be true. Why do men ask in their petitions that grace which they do not in their hearts desire, but because they do not feel the smart, and are not loathed with the evil of their sins that they confess. Thus many confess their sins, as beggars

Sometimes shew their sores, which they are not willing to have cured. Again, as thou art in confession of sin, so thou wilt be in thy acknowledgements of mercy; the lower thou fallest in the abasement of thy self for thy sins, the higher thou wilt mount in thy praises for his mercies. The rebound of the ball is suitable to the force with which it is thrown down. The deeper the base is in confession, the shriller will the treble of thy praises be, for these mutually aggravate one another. The greater our mercies are, the greater are our sins, and the greater our sins, the greater are the mercies, which notwithstanding them our good God vouchsafeth us. So that the sense we have of one must needs be in proportion to the other; as we are afflicted for sin, so will we be affected with mercy.

Fourthly, Improve the intervals of prayer with seasonable and suitable meditations, that thou maist be fitted to return to the work with more life and vigour. Meditation is Prayers Hand-maid, to wait on it both before and after the performance. It is as the plough before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer, and the harrow to cover the seed when 'tis sown. As the hopper feeds the mill with grist, so doth meditation the heart with matter for prayer. Now if it be necessary that thou should consider before duty what thou art to pray, then surely after duty to make reflection on thy self how thou didst pray. The mill may go, and yet no corn be ground. Thus thou maist possibly confess many sins, and yet thy heart be broken and ground with sorrow for none of them all; thou maist pray for many graces, and exercise little or no grace in thy praying for them (thy heart being lazy, and putting no weight to the work) without which these spices are not broken, and so send not forth their sweet savour. Look therefore back upon the past duty, and observe narrowly what the behaviour of thy heart was in it; if thou findest it to have been lazy, and drew loose in its gears, or plaid the truant by gadding from the work with impertinent thoughts; in a word, if under the power of any sinful distemper, be sure at thy return to the duty of prayer, that thou chargest this home upon thy self with shame and sorrow. This is the only way to stay Gods hand, and stop him from commencing a suit against thee: *If we judge our selves we shall not be judged, 1 Cor. 11. 31. Ubi desinit iustitia, incipit iudicium*, If we do not justice on our selves, then God will right himself as well as he can. Indeed thou canst not in faith pray for pardon of these sins, till thou hast shewn thy self on Gods side, by entering thy protest against them. Moses took the right method, he exprest his zeal first for God against Israels sin of the golden Calf, and then fell hard to the work of prayer to God for the pardon of it; He durst not open his lips for them to God, till he had vented his zeal for God, *Exod. 32. 26.* compared with *30. 31. verses*. And if he took this course when to intercede for others, much more then shouldst thou when to pray for the pardon of thy own sin.

Again, If upon this review of thy prayer, thou findest thy heart was warm in the work, that thy affections flowed out to God, and his reciprocated love again by unbosoming himself to thee, take heed that

no secret pride robs thee of thy new got treasure; be humble and thankful, remembering they were not thy own wings on which thou wert carried. And also be careful to improve these divine favours, given to encourage thee in the work, as the handfuls of ears of corn let fall for Ruth in the field of Boaz; God would not that they should stop thy mouth, but open it wider when thou comest again to pray. Did thy heart begin to melt in thy bosom? O now cry for more brokenness of heart. Did thy God cast a kind look on thee? let it set thee a longing for fuller discoveries of his love. When the beggar sees the rich man putting his hand to his purse, he cries more earnestly. God is now on the giving hand, and this should embolden thee to ask; as Abraham, who as God yielded, made his approaches closer, improving the ground which he got by inches, for a further advantage to gain more, *Gen. 18. 27.*

SECT. II.

Thirdly, The third word of Direction is to the Christian, how he should carry himself when the day for extraordinary prayer is over, and this lies in a holy watch that he is to set upon himself. He that prays and watcheth not, is like him that sows a field with precious seed, but leaves the gate open for hogs to come and root it up; or him that takes great pains to get money, but no care to lay it up safely when he hath it. If Satan cannot beat thee in the field, yet he hopes to have thee at an advantage when thou hast disbanded thy forces, the duty be past, and thou liest in a careless posture. Esau promised himself an opportunity of avenging himself on Jacob, *The days of mourning* (saith he) *for my father are at hand, then will I slay him, Gen. 27.* Thus saith Satan, The days of mourning and fasting will soon be over, he will not be always upon his knees praying, not always beating down his body with fasting, and then I will fall upon him. Now one of these two ways thy danger is like to come upon thee, either by his wounding thy faith, or slackening thy care in thy obedient walking; and if he can do either, he will give a sad blow to thy prayers.

First, Look therefore after such a day to thy faith, to pray and not to act faith, is to shoot and not look where the arrow lights; to send a ship with Merchandise to sea, and look for no return by the voyage. Thou hast in prayer laboured to overcome God to hear and help thee; now take as much pains to overcome thy heart into a quiet waiting on God, and entire confidence in him. When Jehosaphat had ended his publick fast, he stands up the next day and speaks these words to his people, that had joyned with him in that solemn duty, *Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper, 2 Chron. 20. 20.* So when our blessed Saviour had taught his Disciples to pray, then he presseth them entirely to commit themselves and their affairs to that God to whom they prayed, *Math. 6.* Truly else extraordinary prayer is but extraordinary prattle; we mock God, and our prayers will mock us, for no fruit will come of them. The Hunter may want

want his supper, though his dog runs fast and mouths it well, if when he comes at the prey he dares not fasten upon it. Now it is faiths office to fasten on the promise, and take hold of God, without which thy loud cry in prayer is bootless and fruitless. O canst thou trust thy cause with the Lawyer, after thy opening it to him? and put thy life into the Physicians hand, by following his prescriptions, when thou hast acquainted him with thy disease? and dardest thou not venture thy stake in Gods hand, after thou hast poured thy soul forth to him in prayer? This is a great folly; Why shouldst thou think Omnipotency cannot help, or truth and faithfulness will not? yea, a grievous sin to bring the Name of the great God into question by thy unbelief. Yet this our Saviour complains sadly to be the usage that God meets with at their hands from whom he might expect better. *Shall not God avenge his Elect which cry day and night to him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.* What greater security can the heart of a Saint desire, more than the word of a faithful God? yet few to be found after all their praying for deliverance that can entirely wait for the same. *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Luk. 18.

Secondly, Thy obediential walking. Solomon's advice is, to *keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God*, Ecclef. 5. 1. Mine at present is, to look to thy foot as thou comest from it. Thou mayst soon do thy self more mischief, than all the Devils in Hell can do thee. They cannot intercept thy prayers, and hinder the happy return of them into thy bosom; but thou mayst soon do it. *Behold, the Lords hand is not shortned that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*, Isa. 59. 1. This is the whisperer that separateth chief friends, that makes God our best friend stand aloof from his people and their prayers. Be as careful, Christian, after a fast, as a man would be after strong physick; a cold catch'd now, a little disorder in thy walking may be of sad consequence. Remember that as thou hast left thy prayers, so thy vows with the Lord; as thou lookest God should answer the one, so he expects thou shouldst pay the other. Break thy promise to him, and thou dischargest God with thy own hand of any mercy he owes thee; it is folly to think thou canst bind God, and leave thy self free.

CHAP. L.

Of the Precatory part of Prayer, with a four-fold similitude to be observed in praying for spiritual and temporal mercies.

Having dispatch'd the first branch in the distinction of the kinds of prayer, which held forth the *diversos modos orandi*, from which hath been shewn, That we are to pray with all manner of prayer, *Ejaculatory* and *Composed*, *Solitary* and *Social*, *Private* and *Publick*, *Ordinary* and *Extraordinary*; We now take up the second branch, and are to consider *diversam materiam orationis*, the diverse matter of prayer. And thus, *To pray with all prayer and supplication*, is to encircle the whole matter of prayer within the compass of our duties, and not to leave any thing out of our prayers which God would have taken in. Now this diversity of prayers matter, some think they may find in the two words of the Text, *αἰνεσις* and *ἐκτενσις*, but I shall not ground my discourse on so nice a criticism. We will content our selves with the division, which the same Apostle makes, *Phil. 4. 6. In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*; and *1 Thess. 5. 17, 18. Pray without ceasing; In every thing give thanks.* In both which places the whole matter of prayer is comprehended in these two; Request and Thanksgiving. These two are like the double motion of the lungs, by which they suck in and breathe out the air again. In the Petitionary part of prayer, we desire something at Gods hands; in Thanksgiving, we return praise to him for mercies received from him. I begin with the Petitionary part of prayer, and it is threefold, Precative, Deprecative, Imprecative; as

for that of Intercession, we shall leave it to another place, under those words, *Supplication for all Saints.*

First, *Precatory*, that part of prayer, I mean, wherein the Christian desires of God in the Name of Christ, some good thing of the Promise to be given unto him. Now the good things promised are either Spiritual or Temporal; those that respect our souls, and our eternal salvation, or those which relate to our bodies and temporary estate of them in this life. Such a large field hath the Christian given him for his requests to walk in, for *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. This earth below, to a Saint is a Land of Promise, though not the Land which is chiefly promised. God hath not promised him heaven, but left him to the wide world to shift for his outward subsistence; he hath not bid them live by faith for their souls, but live by their wits for their bodies. No, he that hath promised to give him *grace and glory*, hath also said, *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11. Their Bill of fare here is provided as well as their Inheritance hereafter. Now all that I shall do here is to put a compass into your hand, by the help of which you may steer your course safely, when you are bound in your requests to either point of the promise, whether it be for temporal or spiritual mercies. And that I may not run you beside the true channel upon Rocks or Sands, I shall touch the

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Needle

Needle of that Compass I would commend to your use with the Loadstone of the Scripture, from which we may gather a four-fold similitude to be used in our request, for spiritual and temporal good things promised; and a three-fold dissimilitude also. First, a four-fold similitude.

First, Whether thou prayest for the one or the other, thou must pray in the sense of thy own unworthiness, for thou deservest neither. When Christ prays for us, he pleads as an Advocate for justice, because he payed before he prays, and asks but what he gives the price for; but we poor creatures are beggars, and must crave all as pure alms, for the money comes not out of our purse that made the purchase; neither was God the Father bound to engage his Son, or the Son to engage himself in our recovery, who were fallen by forfeiture into the hands of divine justice. So that mercy is the only plea, thou, who art a sinner, canst make with God. Thou maist with man stand upon thy desert, thus Jacob claimed his wages at Labans hand; but when he hath to do with God, he changeth his plea, and sues *sub forma pauperis*, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewn thy servant, Gen. 32. 10. So Daniel, We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. No blessing so great but may be obtained where mercy is the plea, and none so little that we merit. If thou wouldst therefore beg any thing at Gods hand, confess thou deservest nothing. Then we are fit to receive great things from God, when we are least in our own eyes, then nearest the Crown, when we judge our selves unworthy of a crust. The proud Pharisee brought his righteousness in his prayer to God, and carried away his sin bound upon him; the Publican brought his sin in his humble confession, and carries away his absolution and justification with him. Thus God crosseth his hands like Jacob in giving his blessings.

Secondly, In both thou must pray in faith, for both spiritual and temporal blessings are promised, and therefore thou art to believe, that God will be as faithful and punctual in the performance of the less promises that concern this life, as in the more weighty matters which respect thy eternal happiness in the other. Indeed he promiseth spiritual blessings in *specie*, grace and glory he will give; but temporal enjoyments in *valour*, either in kind or value; *No good thing will he withhold*: And it is fit he should judge when a temporal enjoyment will be good for us, and when it will be better to give some other thing in the lieu of it. Hence that method in our Lords Prayer, first to pray, *Thy will be done*, before we pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*. But the Seal is the same which ratifies temporal promises with that which he sets to spiritual, his Truth and Faithfulness are as deeply obliged to perform temporal promises, according to the tenure in which they are made, as to make good the other. And therefore we are as strongly to acquiesce in his care & providence for our protection and provision here, as for our salvation hereafter; else he had done his people wrong to take them off from an anxious care for those things which he meant not to charge his providence with,

his Providence —

Certainly if he bids us, *Be careful for none of these things, but only let our requests be made known to him*, he intends not our loss by our ease, but thereby would have us understand and believe, that he will take the care upon himself, and give us at last a full account of his love and faithfulness in the issue of his providence, how all was disposed for our best advantage.

Thirdly, We must joyn our endeavour in the use of all means with our prayers, whether they be put up for spiritual or temporal blessings. Lazy beggars are not to be relieved at our door, 2 Thess. 3. 10. *This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat*. And certainly God will not bid them welcome to his door, whom he would have us deny at ours. We must pray with our hand at the Pump, or the ship will sink in sight of our prayers. Is it temporal subsistence thou prayest for? pray and work, or pray and starve. Dost thou think to set God at work, while thou sittest with thy hand in thy bosom? These two Proverbs in Solomon are observable, *The diligent hand makes rich*, Prov. 10. 4. and vers. 22. *The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it*. He that prays but is not diligent, is not like to be rich; he that is diligent but prays not, may be rich, but he cannot be blessed with his riches; but he that obtains his riches by sincere prayer in conjunction with his diligence, is rich by the blessing of God, and shall escape the sorrow which the worldling lays up with his money; yea, though he gets not an estate, yet he hath the blessing of God, and that makes him rich when there is no money in his purse. Again, Is it any spiritual blessing thou prayest for? Wouldst thou have more knowledge in the things of God? think not it will drop into thy mind without endeavour. Daniel studied as well as prayed, his eyes were one while on the book, and another while lift up to Heaven in prayer, Dan. 9. 2. *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*, Dan. 12. 4. It is got by running from one means to another; as the Merchants ship takes in some of her freight at one port, some at another, so the Christian gets some light in a Sermon, some in a Conference, some in one duty, some in another. And he that takes up one duty, but through sloth neglects the rest, saves but his pains to lose his gains. Sometimes God is found in this duty, and sometimes in that, on purpose to keep up the credit of all, that we wave none.

Fourthly, Our requests for both must be spiced with thanksgiving; *Let your requests be made known with thanksgiving*, Phil. 4. and 1 Thess. 5. *In every thing give thanks*. Art thou praying for the love and favour of God? Bless God thou art where it may be obtained, and not in hell past hope or help. Is it health thou desirest? Bless God for life; *It is the Lords mercy we are not consumed*. No condition on Earth can be of so sad a colour, in which there may not some eye of white, some mixture of mercy be found interwoven. *Pura tenebra*, utter darkness without any stricture of mercy is found in hell alone. Come not therefore to pray, till you know also what to praise God for. As God hath an open hand to give, so he hath an open eye to see who comes to his door, and to discern between the thankful beggar, and

and the unthankful. Will God give more to him, on whom all is lost that he hath formerly bestowed? Indeed he doth do good to the evil and unthankful, but it is not a gracious return of their prayers, but an act of his common providence, of which they will have little comfort when he brings the bounty of his providence in judgement against them, to aggravate their sins, and encrease their torment.

CHAP. LI.

Contains a three-fold dissimilitude and difference to be made in framing our requests for temporal and spiritual mercy.

NOW follows a three-fold dissimilitude which we are to observe in framing our requests for spiritual and temporal mercies.

First, Temporal mercies are chiefly to be desired for the sake of spiritual, but Spiritual mercies for themselves, and not for temporal advantages. First, Temporal chiefly to be desired for the sake of spiritual blessings, and not their own. The traveller desires a horse, not for it self so much as for the convenience of his journey he is to go. Thus the Christian, when praying for temporal things, should desire them as helps in his way and passage to heaven. I do not say it is unlawful to desire life, health, and other comforts of this life, for the suitableness that these have to our natural affections, and to supply our outward necessities; but to desire them only for this is low and base; it is the meer cry of the creature; the Ravens thus cry, and all the beasts of the field seek their meat of God; that is, they desire the preservation of their lives, and make their moan when they want that which should support them. And these creatures being made for no higher end, than the enjoyment of these particular narrow good things, they observe the Law of their Creation. But thou art an intellectual being, and by thy immortal soul, which is a spiritual substance, thou art as near a kin to the Angels in heaven, as thou art by thy meaner bodily part to the beasts, yea, allied to God thy maker, not only made by him, as they were, but for him, which they are not. He is thy chief good, and therefore thou infinitely dishonourest him, and thy self too, if thou canst sit down short of him in thy desires. *Nihil bonum sine summo bono*, nothing should be good to thee without God, who is thy chief good. *Non placent tibi mea, sine mecum; nec tua mihi, sine tecum*; thus shouldst thou say and pray, O Lord, as all my gifts and services do not please thee, except with them I give thee my self; so none of these gifts of thy bounty can content me, except with them thou wilt bestow thy self on me. Now this regular motion of the heart in praying for temporals is to be found only in those, whose inward wheels (I mean powers and faculties) are set right by the hand of divine grace. Man in his corrupt state is like *Nebuchadnezzar* at grass, he hath a Beasts heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals, to elevate his desires to a higher pitch and nobler end. Doth sick *David* pray that some further

time may be added to the lease of his temporal life? it is not out of a fond love to this world, or the carnal entertainments of it, but to prepare himself the better for another life; *O spare me a little that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more*, Psal. 39. 13. Is he comforted with hopes of a longer stay here? it is not any of this worlds carnal pleasures that kindles this joy in his holy breast, but the advantage that thereby he shall have for praising God in the land of the living. *Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God*, Psal. 42. 11. The Saint hath as quick a sense to taste the sweetness of a temporal mercy as another, but his heart being spiritual, and so acquainted with higher enjoyments, he desires with *Luther*, that God would not put him off with these shells of blessings. O how few thus pray for temporals! most are but propping for their lusts, while praying for them, *Jam. 4. 3. Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*. One is sick, and prays for health that he may be again at his pots or harlots; another is childless, and he would have an heir, to uphold the pride and grandeur of his house, but not the increase of Christs family in the world; a third would be a greater man in the world, and for what? may be, that having more power he may take the fuller revenge on his enemies, that now are out of his reach; and others that bring not their sacrifice with so evil a mind; yet look no higher than their carnal contentment in the enjoyment they would have, as appears by their carriage in the use of it. Thus the Mariners in a sea-storm, Psal. 107. *They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and when they have their life given them as they desire, then they are glad, because they are quiet*, and God hears no more of them now their turn is served; a plain evidence that they were selfish and carnal in their prayer for this mercy, because they improve it not for a spiritual end: Which makes the Psalmist break out into that holy option and vote, *vers. 31. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!* But much more abominable is it to pray for spiritual mercies for the sake of some temporal advantage we hope to have by them: Thus *Simon Magus* desired the gifts of the holy Ghost, that he might be *magus*, a man of fame and name. And do not some labour to bring the Gospel to Town, as an expedient to mend their takings in their shop; others pray for the assistances of the Spirit, and project their own praise by the means, basely perverting those holy things to secular advantages? O horrid baseness!

basenels! as it one should desire a Princes Robe to stop an Oven with it. This is, as *Austin* saith, *Uti Deo, ut fruamur mundo*. To make God the stirrup, and the creature our saddle.

Those spiritual blessings which are intrinsecal to our happiness, and indispensably necessary to our salvation, these we are to pray for with an undeniable importunity; such are pardon of sin, the love and favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit; to be cold or indifferent in our prayers for these, is a great wickedness. The Promise will bear us out in our greatest importunity, *Psal.* 105. 4. *Seek ye the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore.* *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely.* *Tantum possumus in negotio Religionis, quantum volumus.* Nothing loseth us these mercies more, than weak velleities, and faint desires of them. But our prayers for temporal blessings must be with a latitude of submission to the will of God, because they are promised conditionally. The promise is the foundation of our faith, the superstructure therefore of our prayers must not jet beyond it. This was *Israel's* sin, *Who shall give us flesh to eat?* *Numb.* 11. 18. God had indeed promised to feed them in the wilderness, but not to give them every dish their wanton palate craved; and therefore when Gods Bill of fare contents them not, but they cry for flesh, they have their desire, but fowr sauce with it; for while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, *Psal.* 78. 31. thus they were fed for the slaughter by the meat they inordinately lusted after. O take heed of peremptory prayers for any temporal enjoyment, for thereby thou beggest but a rod for thy own back. *Rachel* must have children or else she dies, and she at last hath two, but dies in travel of the latter. It was a smart saying of one to his wife, who passionately desired a son, and had one at last, but none of the wisest, *Wife* (saith he) thou hast long passionately desired a boy, and now thou hast one that will always be a boy. God may

justly set some print of his anger on that mercy, which he answers our peremptory prayers with. Why alas, must we needs have that which we must needs lose, or shall not enjoy while we have it?

Thirdly, Those spiritual blessings which are intrinsecal to the Saints happiness, are to be prayed for with boundless desires; not, Give me thus much grace and I will trouble thee for no more: No, God gives a little grace, not to stop our mouth, but to open it wider for more. Yet alas, how unreasonably reasonable are most in this particular? so much holiness contents them as will like salt keep them from putrifying in gross sins, that they be not unfavoury to the nostrils of their neighbours, or as will save them from the lash of a tormenting conscience; like School-boys, that care for no more of their lesson than will save a whipping. Alas, this is not to desire it at all; it is thy credit abroad, and thy quiet within thou desirest, and the other but to help thee to these. He that knows the true worth of grace, thinks he hath never enough till satisfied with it in glory. *Paul* had more than many of his brethren, yet prays, and presseth as hard after more as if he had none at all, *Phil.* 3. 13, 14. But in temporal enjoyments, we are to stint our desires, and not let out all the sails of our affections when praying for them. A gracious heart is as unwilling to have too much of these, as afraid of having too little; Give me neither riches nor poverty, but food convenient for me, *Prov.* 30. I think not a Saint but could cheerfully say Amen to this prayer of *Agur*, I am sure he ought. That house is best seated, which stands neither on the bleak top of the hill, nor on the wet bottom. The nature of these temporal good things is enough to convince any wise man, that the mean is best. They are not the Christians Fraught but his Ballast, and therefore are to be desired to poise, not load the vessel; they are not his portion, Heaven is that, but his spending-money in his journey thither; and what Traveller that is wise desires to carry any greater charge about him than will pay for his quarters?

C H A P. LII.

Of Deprecatory Prayer in particular, how we are to deprecate
Evil in five particulars.

THe second branch in the petitionary part of prayer is Deprecation, wherein we desire of God in the Name of Christ the removal of some evil felt or feared, inflicted or threatned. So that Evil is the object of Deprecation. Here I shall briefly point at the evils to be deprecated, and how we are to frame our requests to God in deprecating of them. All evil is comprehended in these two, Sin, or Suffering.

First, Sin. This indeed is the evil of evils, against which chiefly we are to let flie the arrows of our prayers. This is the only thing that is intrinsically evil in its own nature. Suffering is rather evil to us than in it self, and our sufferings have both their being and malignity from the evil of our sins; had there been no sin, there had been no suffering; where that ceaseth, this is not to be found. No sorrow in Heaven, because no sin. These, like Twins, live and die together. *If thou dost evil, sin lies at the door;* that is, if thou dost the evil of sin, prepare to meet with the evil of suffering. Now in sin, two things to be deprecated, Guilt, and Filth.

First, Guilt, this is the proper effect and consequent of every sin; whenever any sin is committed, there is guilt contracted, whereby the creature becomes obnoxious to the wrath of God; and this guilt wears not off by length of time, but continues bound upon the sinner, till God by an act of pardoning mercy absolves him; so that though the act of sin be transient, and passeth away as soon as the fact is committed, yet the creature is in the bond of his iniquity, held with this chain of guilt as a prisoner to divine justice, till he by faith and repentance sues out his pardon; even as a felon, who may be is not presently after the fact taken and brought into judgement, yet abides a debtor to the Law where-ever he is, till he can obtain his pardon. Now need I speak any thing, to set out the dismal and deplored condition of a soul under guilt, thereby to provoke you to pray for the removal of it? There is no mountain so heavy as the guilt of the least sin is to an awakened conscience; better thy house were haunted with devils, than thy soul with guilt. If thy conscience tells thee thou art in the bond of iniquity, thou canst not but be in the gall of bitterness, they are joyned together, *Act. 8. 23.* Guilt is a burden, which the sinner can neither stand under, nor throw off, one compares him to a beast stung with a Gad fly, fain would he run from his pain, but still he finds it in him. This lies throbbing in his soul like a thorn in the flesh, and will not let him rest by day, or sleep by night; he turns himself on his bed as *Regulus* in his barrel stuck with nails, not an easie plat that he can find in it. This makes him afraid of every disease that comes to Town, Pox, or Plague, lest it should arrest him, and bring him by death to judgement; his guilt makes him think every bush a

man, and every man a messenger of divine vengeance to slay him. The mark that God set upon guilty *Cain, Gen. 4. 15.* is by many interpreters conceived to be a trembling heart, made visible by a gasty countenance, and discomposed carriage of his outward man: And that passage, *vers. 12.* *A fugitive and a vagabond thou shalt be in the Earth,* the Septuagint read thus, *σέσω και τρέμων ἐν τῇ τῆς γῆς,* thou shalt be sighing and trembling in the Earth. No convulsion-fit so distorts the body, as sin doth the soul.

Now in this prayer against Guilt, and for pardon, observe these particulars.

First, Pray with a deep sense and sorrow for thy sins. The worst nonsense in prayer is of the heart, when that hath no sense of the sin he deprecates, or of the mercy he desires. Nothing more hardens the heart of God against our prayer, than the hardness of our heart in prayer; and on the contrary, no such way to melt God into pity, as for our own hearts to dissolve into sorrow. He that would have us *give wine to the sad of heart, Prov. 31.* saves this vessel (the promise I mean of pardoning mercy, which holds the sweetest wine in Gods cellar) to revive the heart of the contrite ones, *Isa. 57.* A tear in the eye for sin adorns the creature, more than a jewel in his ear, and his prayer more than all the embroidery of expressions in it can do. While the *Publican* smote his own breast, he got into Gods bosom, and carried a pardon home with him. Will Christ drop his blood to procure thy pardon, who canst shed no tears for thy sin? The truth is, here lies the difficulty of the work, not how to move God, but how to get the sinners own heart melted. It is harder to get sin felt by the creature, than the burden, when felt, removed, by the hand of a forgiving God. Never was tender-hearted Chirurgeon more willing to take up the vein, and bind up the wound of his fainting patient when he hath bled enough, than God is by his pardoning mercy to ease the troubled spirit of a mourning Penitent. It is one rule he gives his servants in their practice upon their spiritual patients, to beware of making too great an evacuation in the souls of poor sinners by excessive humiliation, lest thereby the spirits of their faith be too much weakened; *2 Cor. 2. 7.* *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, &c.* So that ye ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow.

Secondly, Justifie and clear God in all the expressions of his displeasure for thy sins. Thou dost perhaps carry the marks of his anger on thy flesh in some outward judgement, or, which is worse, the terrors of the Lord have taken hold of thy soul, and like poysoned arrows lie burning in thy conscience, where they stick; acknowledge him just, and all this that

that is come upon thee *less than thy iniquities have deserved*, Ezr. 9. The way to escape the fatal stroke of his axe, is to kiss the block; clear his justice, and fear not but his mercy will save thy life. Thou hast a promise on thy side, *If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant*, Levit. 26. 41, 42. David took this course and sped, Psal. 51. *I acknowledge my transgressions*, vers. 3. and why is he so willing to spread his sins in his confession before the Lord? see vers. 4. *That thou might'st be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*: He would have all the world know, that God did him no wrong in the judgments that came upon him, he takes all the blame upon himself.

Thirdly, Take heed thou prayest not with a reservation, be sure thou renouncest what thou would'st have God remit. God will never remove the guilt so long as thou entertainest the sin. What Prince will pardon his treason that means to continue a traitor. It is desperate folly to desire God to forgive, what thou intendest to commit. Thou hadst as good speak out, and ask leave to sin with impunity, for God knows the language of thy heart, and needs not thy tongue to be an interpreter. Some Princes have misplaced their high favours to their heavy cost, as the Emperor *Leo Armenius*, who pardoned that monster of ingratitude *Michael Balbus*, and was the same night in which he was delivered out of prison murdered by him. But the great God is subject to no mistake in his Government, never got hypocrite a pardon in the disguise of a Saint. He will call thee by thy own name, though thou comest to him in the semblance of a penitent; *Come in thou wife of Jeroboam*, said the Prophet. Hypocrisy is too thin a veil to blind the eyes of the Almighty. Thou may'st put thy own eyes out, so as not to see him; but thou canst never blind his eyes that he should not see thee. And as long as God loves himself, he must needs hate the hypocrite; and if he hates him, surely he will not pardon him. The pardoned soul and the sincere are all one, Psal. 32. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile*.

Fourthly, Make Christ thy plea. Pardon of sin is a favour not known in the first Covenant, Do, and live; Sin, and die, were all its contents; no room left for an after-game by that Law. The Gospel-Covenant is our *Tabula post naufragium*, the only plank by which we may recover the shore after our miserable wrack. This Covenant is founded in Christ, who hath upon agreement with his Father undertook to answer the demands of the Law, and happily performed what he undertook; upon which the Gospel is preached, and pardon promised to all that repent and believe on him; *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour*, Act. 5. 31. *Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, Rom. 3. 25. As therefore when Christ intercedes for poor sinners, he carries his blood with him and presents it to God, for the price of that forgiveness he desires for them, so thou may'st bring the same blood in the hand of

thy faith, when thou prayest for the pardon of thy sins, for *without blood there is no remission*, Heb. 9. This is the more to be heeded, because many out of ignorance, and some from a corrupt principle, apply themselves in their prayers to the absolute goodness and mercy of God for pardon: Ask them, why they hope to be forgiven, and they will tell you, God is good, and they hope he will be merciful to them, seeing his nature is so gracious. But alas, they forget that he is just as well as merciful, and mercy will not act but with the consent of his justice: Now the only *salve* for the justice of God is the satisfaction of Christ. *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*, Rom. 3. 26. So that to desire God to forgive thee thy sin without the intervening of Christs satisfaction, is to desire God to be unjust, and pardon thee with the loss of his own honour; and how welcom thou art like to be that comest to him on such an errand, is easie to think.

Fifthly and lastly, Take no denial in this thy request, but pray for it with unwearied importunity. It is a mercy thou canst not want, it is more necessary than thy very being, better never to be than ever be unpardoned. Think but a little on thy dismal condition, while guilt is not taken off, and thy pardon not obtained, and it is impossible that thou should'st be a cold faint suitor for this mercy of mercies. Know then, while unpardoned thou art Gods prisoner, all the plagues written in the Law cleave as close to thee as thy girdle to thy loyns, every moment thou may'st fear they should take hold upon thee, as thou walkest in thy house, sittest at thy table, or liest in thy bed. Where canst thou be safe who hast God thine enemy? Can the bread resist him that eats it? or the tree withstand the axe of the feller? truly no more canst thou the wrath of an avenging God: Is it not he that holds the stoutest devils in chains? he who can kindle a fire in thy own bones and bosom, and make thee consume like lime with the inward burning of thy self-tormenting thoughts. Is he not a righteous God, whose justice binds him in the distributions of justice, to be exact according to the sinners demerit? Is he not the everlasting God? not a sorry creature, who may threaten thee to day, and be dead himself to morrow; but Eternity it self, who ever lives to take vengeance on sinners, out of whose hands thou canst not escape by dying. In earthly Courts, when the man dies, his cause dies with him, because out of their jurisdiction, and past their summons: But at death thou fallest into the hands of the living God, who will pursue his quarrel with thee in the other world also. No sooner is thy soul abandoned of thy body, and turned out of its earthly house, but it shall return to God to receive its doom. Neither shall thy body long rest in the grave, where it is earth'd, but be called forth to share with the soul in torment, whose partner it had been in sin. The parting of these at death to a guilty soul is sad enough, but their meeting again at the great day of judgement will be much more dismal: For husband and wife that have joyn'd

in some bloody murder, to be attached and sent to several prisons in order to their trial, must needs fill them with the fear and terror of their approaching judgement; but much more dreadful is it to them when brought forth to receive their sentence, and suffer at the same gibbet together. At death, the sinners body is disposed of to one prison, his soul to another, and both to meet again at the great day of Assize for the World, then to be sent by the final sentence of the Judge to everlasting flames in hells fiery furnace, where after the poor wretch hath experimented a thousand millions of years the weight of Gods just vengeance, he shall find himself no nearer the end of his misery than he was the first day where in his torment commenced. Then death will be desired as a favour, but it shall flee from him, his misery being both intolerable and interminable. By this time I suppose a pardon will be thought worth

thy having, and too good to be lost by sluggish sleepy praying for it. When therefore thou hast chased thy soul thus into a sense of the indispensable necessity of this mercy, then take up a holy resolution to lay thy siege close to the Throne of grace, and never to rise till God open the gates of his mercy to thee. As 'tis so necessary thou canst not want it, so thou hast the promise of a faithful God that thou shalt not miss it, upon the timely and sincere seeking of it. *If we confess, he is just and faithful to forgive.* Prayers and tears are the weapons with which the Almighty may be overcome. *Manasseh*, who could not on his Throne (when he sinned and stouted it out against God) defend himself from the justice of God, yet in his dungeon and fetters, greatly humbling himself before the Lord, obtained his mercy. *So Israel, When he sinned he died, but when he spake trembling, then he was exalted, Hos. 13. 1.*

CHAPL III.

How to deprecate the defiling power of Sin.

THE second thing in Sin to be deprecated, is the defiling power of it. He that desires not to be purged from the filth of Sin, prays in vain to be eased of the guilt. If we love the work of Sin, we must like the wages also. A false heart could be willing to have his Sin covered, but the sincere desires his nature may be cured and cleansed. *David* begg'd a clean heart as well as a quiet conscience, *Psal. 51. Blot out all mine iniquities; Create in me a clean heart, O God,* vers. 10. he desires water to purifie his heart, as well as blood to sprinkle and pacifie his conscience. Now in framing thy requests as to this, observe these particulars.

First, Be sure thou comest with a deep abhorrence of thy self for that sin-filth which cleaves to thee. This is called, *Knowing the plague of a mans own heart*, 1 King. 8. 38. When a creature is affected and afflicted with the sense of his corruptions, as if he had so many plague-sores running upon him, and loaths himself for them, as much as *Job* did for the boils and sores with which his body was covered. The *Leper* was commanded in order to his cure, to put himself into a mourners habit, *Levit. 13. 45. His garments shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering on his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.* Why all this, but to expresse the deep sense of his sin and misery? Look upon the Saints in Scripture, and you shall find this was their way to abase themselves in their prayers, with the greatest self-abhorrence that was possible; penitent *David* takes the fool, yea, the beast unto himself, he knows not how to speak bad enough of himself, *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as a beast before thee, Psal. 73. 22. Holy Job* cries out, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes,* chap. 42. 6. Others blush, and as much ashamed to be seen in the presence of God, as one that had fallen into some puddle or Jakes would be in that pickle to come before his Prince.

Secondly, In praying against thy lusts, look thy heart goes with thy tongue. In nothing do our hearts put more cheats upon us than in our prayers, and in no requests more than in those which are levelled against our lusts. That is least oftentimes intended, which is most pretended. And truly we had need be well acquainted with our selves, before we can find the bottom of our designs. *Austin* confelleth when he was a young man, and forced by conviction in his conscience to pray, that God would deliver him out of the bondage of his lust, yet the secret whispers of his heart were, *Non adhuc Domine, Not yet Lord*; he was afraid God should take him at his word. Thus the hypocritical *Jews* first set up their idols in their hearts, and then enquired of the Lord, *Ezek. 14. 1.* this is a great wickedness. And it were a just, though a heavy plague, for God to answer such according to the secret vote of their hearts, by giving them up to those lusts which they inwardly crave. When *Paul* begs prayers for himself, to embolden them in their requests for him, he assures them of his sincerity, *Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly,* *Hebr. 13. 18.* as if he had said, I durst not make you my spokesmen to God, if my heart did check me that I did secretly comply with any sin, and did not mean in all things to live honestly. How then canst thou have the face to go thy self to God on an errand, to desire that of him which thou wouldst be loth to have?

Quest. But how may we come to know that our hearts are sincere or hypocritical, in praying against the defiling power of sin?

Ans. First, Observe whether thy prayer be uniform, laid against all sin, one lust as well as another. Sincerity makes not here a balk, and there a furrow, is not hot against one lust and cold against another, but goes through-stitch in the work; *It hates every false way, Psal. 119. 104.* It shoots its arrows

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arrows at the whole flock, and singles not this sin out in his prayers which he would have taken, and that left; *Let no iniquity have dominion over me, ver. 132.* he knows; if all his chains were knockt off, and onely one left upon him, he should be as true a slave to Satan as if all the other were still on. He prays not against one sin because a great one, and pleads for another because it is a little one. The dust and rubbish help to fill up the wall as well as the great stones; little sins contribute as well as great, to make up the partition-wall between God and the creature; every little speck blemisheth the garment, and every penny encreaseth the sum: So little sins defile the soul, and swell the sinners account; therefore he prays against them as well as the other. *David*, who desired to be kept back from *presumptuous sins*, did also beg to be cleansed from his *secret sins*, *Psal. 19.*

Secondly, Observe whether thy heart stand firmly resolved to renounce that sin thou prayest God to subdue. The sincere Christian binds himself, as well as labours, to engage God against his sin. Indeed that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it, *Thou hast heard my vows, Psal. 61. 5. i. e.* his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? if sincere, thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? except thou jugglest with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it. *Remove from me the way of lying, Psal. 119. 29.* there is *David's* deprecation; now mark his promise and vow, *I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgements I have laid before me, vers. 30.* While he prays against the way of lying, he chuseth the way of truth.

Thirdly, Observe thirdly, Whether thou beest vigorous in the use of all appointed means to mortifie the lust thou prayest against. Resolutions in the time of prayer are good, when backt with strenuous endeavours, else but a blind for a false heart to cover it self with. *Sampson* did not only pray he might be avenged on his enemies, but set his hands to the pillars of the House. He that hath bid thee pray against thy lust, hath bid thee shun the occasions of it; *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, lest thou give thy honour unto others, Prov. 5. 8.* that is, lest thou be hooked in to her by the occasion. Thus *Joseph*, that he might not be drawn to lie with his Mistress, would not stay alone in the room with her, *Gen. 39.* So *Prov. 23. 20.* *Be not amongst wine-bibbers; and vers. 31.* *Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup,* because looking may breed liking. Now art thou conscientiously careful to keep out of the way that leads to the sin, and to shun the occasion that might betray thee into the hands of that lust thou prayest against? Certainly, he that would not have his house blown up, will not set his gunpowder in the chimney-corner. Again, God who bids thee pray against thy lusts, commands thee also to take the sword of his Word, by meditating on it, and applying it close to the heart and conscience, to cut them down, and get victory over them. Thus did *David*, he bid the word in his heart that he might not sin. Thou prayest against covetousness, O that God would rid thy heart

of it: Well, what dost thou towards thy own delivery from this base lust? Here is a sword put into thy hand, whose edge is sharp enough to cut and kill it, if thou wilt lay it on in good earnest. This sets forth the vanity of the creature, how vile and base a sin covetousness is; takes away all occasion of inordinate desires and cares for the world by many sweet promises, what he hath laid up in another world for us, and what care in his providence he will take for us in this life. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13.* Now what use dost thou make of this weapon? dost thou strengthen thy assent to the truth of these promises? Labour to affect thy heart with the sweetness of them, and then draw forth this sword to defend thy self against this lust, when the enemy comes with a temptation to it? if so, thou wert sincere in thy prayer. A false heart contents it self with a few idle lazy prayers against his lust, but is afraid to use this sword against it; or if he doth, he strikes with the back and not the edge, or laies his stroke so favourably on, that it shall not much endanger the life of his sin; like a *Mountebank*, that will be sure to make no worse wound in his side than his Balsom will in a day or two cure. Now to raise thy heart to the greater vehemency in praying against thy lusts, labor deeply to affect thy heart what a fearful plague it is (indeed of all other incomparably the greatest) for a soul to be given up of God to the power of his lusts. This consideration if any, will make thee lay close siege to God, and set upon him with the utmost importunity, knowing thou art an undone creature if thou speedest not in thy errand. When God intends to smite home, he takes his aim at the heart, he gives the creature over to his lust: Thus he hardned *Pharaoh* to a final obstinacy, *Exod. 9. 24.* *I will send all my plagues on thy heart.* They did not only light upon the beasts and fruits of the field, or upon their own bodies, but chiefly on their hearts and spirits, hardning them into obstinacy to their destruction. And this indeed is to send all Plagues in one; other plagues that reach only to estate or body, are consistent with the love and favour of God; he can smite the body, and smile on the soul; blast the mans estate, and bleis him with spiritual riches; make him poor in the world, and rich in faith. But, he that is given up to his lusts is abhorred of God. A Saint may be delivered up to Satan, *ut liçori*, to correct him, for the destruction of the flesh and saving of his spirit; but it is the brand of a Reprobate to be delivered up to Satan, *ut Domino*, that his lusts may have full power over him; which judiciary act of God portends the sinners destruction, *Deut. 2. 30. 2 Theff. 2. 11.* Outward plagues are sometimes in the sinners mouth as a bridle to restrain him from sin, but this is a spur that makes them more mad after their lusts; it takes away the sense of sin, and then the wretch playes the devil, nothing will stop him in his way, but to hell he will go over hedge and ditch.

Pray against the power of thy lusts as a branch of the Gospel-covenant. God is not bound by the first Covenant to stir a foot for mans help. Man went of his own accord over to the devils quarters, he deserted God

God, and chose a new Lord, and in his hands God might have left him without offering any help for his rescue. It was not any tie that man had upon God by the Covenant of nature which obliged him, but his own free grace that moved him to undertake his recovery. And this he doth by making a new Covenant on the ruins of the old. So that whoever will pray against his lust with success, must first become a Covenanter with God, by accepting the terms upon which God in it offers to save us from our Sins, and they are Faith and Repentance; when the soul doth thus face about from his Sins to close with Christ, then he becomes a Covenanter with God, and may with faith call God into the field for his help against this huge host of lusts and devils that come against him. Gods Chariots are his, the whole Militia of Heaven is engaged in his quarrel. *Sin shall not have dominion over you*; and why? *for ye are not under the Law, but under grace*, Rom. 6. 14. that is, You are not under the Law-covenant made with Adam, but under the Gospel-covenant made with Christ, and through him with all believers. O how many prayers against Sin are lost, for want of well understanding this grand notion of the Gospel? A great cry is made, and complaint by many of their sins to God, and victory over them pretended to be desired; yet they live, and grow stronger every day than other; and what is the reason? alas! they stand not in a federal relation to God, neither take they any care how to get into it. Will a Prince raise

a. an Army to fight for he knows not who? indeed, if his subjects or allies be in distress, he is ready to step in for their succour; but strangers cannot expect he should do this for them. Leagues are made before assistance desired. God first promiseth to bring *Israel under the bond of his covenant*, Ezek. 20. 37. and then *vers. 41. that he will accept them with their sweet savour*. David knew this very well, that the carnal world are abandoned by God, to be trod under the foot of every lust; and therefore when he prays God would order his steps in his Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over him, he desires it as a favour peculiar to those that were near and dear to him, *Deal with me as thou wilt to do unto those that love thy Name*, Psal. 119. 132.

Pray not only against the power of sin, but for the power of holiness also. A naughty heart may pray against his sins, not out of any inward enmity to them, or love to holiness, but because they are troublesome guests to his conscience. Believe it for a certain truth, his zeal is false that seems hot against sin, but is key-cold to holiness. A City is rebellious that keeps their rightful Prince out, though it receives not his enemy in: Nay, the Devil needs not fear, but at last he shall make that soul his Garrison again, out of which for a while he seems shut, so long as it stands empty, and is not filled with solid grace, *Mar. 12. 44, 45*. What indeed should hinder Satans re-entry into that house, which hath none in it to keep him out.

CHAP. LIV.

How to deprecate the evil of suffering Temporal, and Eternal.

THE second object of deprecatory prayer is Suffering; sin brought suffering into the world. Sin is indeed the Elder-Twin, but suffering staid not long after it, for it took it by the heel, presently arresting Adam upon the very place where he committed his trespass, and ever since follows it as close as the shadow doth the body. It leaves not the Saint till death parts him and his sin, but pursues the wicked with their sins into the other world also. So that this distribution of suffering into temporal and eternal shall content us at present, they being comprehensive of all the miseries which sin hath brought upon the sons of men. Now my work in this place shall be only to direct the Christian how to frame his prayer, in deprecating the one and the other also. First, Temporal sufferings, how the Christian is to deprecate and pray against them; which I shall do two ways, *first*, Negatively, how he is not; *secondly*, Affirmatively, how he may and should pray against them.

SECT. I.

First, Negatively. The Christian is not to pray for an immunity from all temporal sufferings, there is no foundation for such a prayer in the promise;

and what God thinks not fit to promise, we must not be bold to ask. Temporal promises are to be understood, saith *Melanchthon, cum exceptione crucis*. God had one Son without sin, but he will have none in this life without suffering. John writes himself, *Your brother and companion in tribulation*, Rev. 1. 9. He hath too high an opinion of himself, that would have God lead him dry-shod on a fair causeway to heaven, while he sees the rest of his brethren march through thick and thin to the same place. Or who thinks he needs not this thorn-hedge of suffering, to keep him as well as others from wandering out of his way to glory. The rod and ferula are not more needful among children at school, than suffering is to the Saints while in their minority here on earth. If thou wert come to that ripeness of ingenuity as to have worn off all thy childishness, thou should'st stay here no longer under the lash; but while thou art subject to sin, thou must submit to his disciplinary rod. Valitudinarianous bodies can as well spare food as physick, and Saints in this their crazy state may as well live without Ordinances as without sufferings. In a word, to pray absolutely against all suffering, is to desire one of the greatest punishments on this side Hell. When God said, *I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredoms*.

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whoredom, *Hof. 4. 9.* he meant them no good by sparing his rod. If we count him an unwise father, that when he puts his child to School indents with his Mallet not to whip him; surely much more folly were it in thee to desire God to privilege thee from all suffering.

Secondly, Affirmatively, in these particulars following.

First, Deprecate the vindicative justice and wrath of God in all temporal sufferings. Thus *Jeremiah* shapes his prayer, *Jer. 10. 24. O Lord, correct me but in judgement, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. And chap. 17. 17. Be not thou a terror to me, thou art my hope in the day of evil.* He declines not suffering, but deprecates wrath, as if he had said, Let trouble come, but not with this message to tell me that thou art my enemy; shoot thy darts, my breast is open to receive them, but let them not be envenom'd arrows, headed with thy punitive justice. Without this sting, all suffering is innocent and harmless; but if the creature does fear (though without just cause) that they are shot out of Justices bow, then they drink up his spirits, and exanimate him presently. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth, *Psal. 39.* That holy woman, *1 King. 17. 18.* was not so much distressed for her sons death, as for the reflexion this sad providence made upon her conscience, Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance and slay my son? Thou canst not therefore be too passionately importunate in deprecating this.

Secondly, Deprecate the snare and temptation that suffering may expose thee to. Satan commonly finds it easie to make some sinful impression upon the Saint when he is heat, and his heart made soft (as *Job* phraseth it) in the furnace of affliction. He is a rare Christian in whom the stream of his grace runs clear upon such roylng. *Job* was a man of a thousand, Gods None-such, *Job 1. None like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man;* yet bewrayed many weaknesses in his troubles, and would have done more, had not God in pity to his poor servant taken the devil off, before he had quite run him down. Christ teacheth us to pray against suffering under the notion of temptation, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;* that is, Let us not be led in to sin when we fall into suffering; let us not fall into thy hands and Satans together. This discovers a holy frame of heart, to be more tender of our conscience than skin, not so much to fear affliction from God, as lest in it we should behave our selves unseemly and unholily towards him. *Agur* is not so much ashamed to beg, as afraid to steal, and so take the name of his God in vain, upon which account he chiefly prays against poverty, *Prov. 30. 8. 9.* There is nothing lost by serving God first, and preferring his honour before our own private interest in our prayers. Self-denial is the best self-seeking, for by neglecting our selves for Gods sake, we oblige him to take the care of us upon himself; and he is the only happy man, who hath his stake laid up in Gods hands.

Thirdly, Deprecate the excess of suffering, that thou beest not over-laden, thy burden too heavy for thy back. This is promised, thou maist therefore

present it in faith, *Jer. 46. 28. I will make a full end of the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure.*

The Patient doth not entrench upon the Physicians art, by desiring him to proportion his dose according to the weakness of his body, if when he hath done this, he acquiesceth in his skill and faithfulness for the same. Indeed to desire God to consider our weakness, and then not to rely on his wisdom and care, but continue jealous and suspicious, or to murmur at his prescriptions, as if the Physick he gives were too churlish and strong, this makes a dishonourable reflection upon God. Sometimes the Physician exceeds the proportion that his fearful patient thinks strong enough, but withal tells him, You are not so weak as you take your self to be, your body may bear so many grains more in the composition; leave me to my art and all shall be well. Thus God, who knows our frame exactly, deals with his people, and is highly pleased to see them satisfied with what he orders them out, *Job 1. 22. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly;* *וְכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה עָשָׂה וְלֹא יָשָׁה בְּעֵינָיו*, so the *Septuagint* read it, he did not impute folly to God; indeed the word *חָפְזָה* is a Noun. The meaning of the place is, *Job* did not make any unworthy reflexion upon God for the evils he suffered by his providence, as if any thing were wanting in his care or wisdom, like some rash Physician, who fails either in timing or tempering his Physick.

Fourthly, Thou maist not only deprecate these evils in thy afflictions, but also pray believingly for a happy issue out of them all. The darkest lane of suffering shall to the Saint have a lightsom end, and all we say is well that ends well. We have heard of the patience of *Job*, and have seen the end of the Lord, that he is very pitiful, *Jam. 5.* This is that which God so fully intends in all his Saints troubles, that he takes pleasure in thinking of it before-hand; *I know the thoughts that I have toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, Jer. 29.* And that petition comes in a happy time to Court, which finds the King thinking of the very business it prays for.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The second kind of suffering is eternal in Hell, this is the center in which all the lines of sin and of misery meet, the common shoal into which they all disgorge themselves, as Rivers do their streams into the vast Ocean; and as Rivers, when they are fallen into the Sea lose their several names in one that comprehends them all, The Ocean; so all the evils of this life, when resolved into this, forget their private names, sickness, pains, poverty, &c. and are called Hell; not that these are all formally and literally there, but virtually, in that the torment of the damned doth not only amount to, but beyond expression exceed them all. As in Heaven there is no belly-chear, yet a feast; no Silks and Satins worn, yet all in glorious robes; as silver is in gold, and gold in a jewel, so all these are in Heaven, because that which is of infinite more value and worth than such things as are of highest reckoning on earth. Thus the great

great miseries of this life are incomparably less than the least torment of hell; never can the creature say he is complearely miserable, till the devouring jaws of that infernal pit enclose him; were the worst of his punishment what he feels here, he might in a manner bleis himself; as *Paul* on the contrary saith, he should judge the Saint miserable above others if all his hope were here. But there is the sinners easeless endless state; there is not so much as one well day to release him a while from his pain, but he shall continue for ever in the height of his paroxysm; no change of weather, or hope of clearing, but a perpetual storm set in to rain fire and brimstone upon him to all eternity, for so long it will be before the arm of the Almighty is weary of pouring out his wrath, or his heart be brought in love with Sin, and reconciled to the sinner. Now in deprecating this, we should endeavour to keep this threefold notion of hell in our thoughts, for which above all we are to desire to be delivered from it.

First, Conceive of hell as a state of Sin as well as of suffering, yea, in its utmost height. Earth is a middle place betwixt heaven and hell. Neither sin in the wicked, nor Grace in the Saint, come here to their full ripeness; Grace being an out-landish slip brought from heavens paradise, riseth not to its just height and procerity, till it be transplanted and set in its native Climate from whence it came. And Sin being a brat of hell, comes not to its full complexion and monstrosity, till it be sent back to the place it came from. Here poor wretches are tolled on to Sin by the pleasure it promiseth, but there they sin out of malice, for nothing else can invite them, where this morsel is eaten with such fowr sauce. On earth the Sinner is maidently, and conceals the venom that is bagg'd in his heart, but in hell he spits it out in blasphemies against heaven. In a word, here he sins with wavering thoughts, and some weak purposes of repenting; but there he is as desperate as the devil himself, hardned beyond all relenting. Now under this notion thou should'st pray to be delivered from hell; that thou mai'st never be one of that damned crew, who think it not enough to fight against God their Maker on earth, but carry the war with them into the other world also, and there continue their feud with implacable enmity to eternity. Certainly the Saints, to whom the motions of Sin in this life are so grievous, above all the crosses and losses that befall them, and who count a few years neighbourhood among the wicked so great an affliction, that they cry, *Wo is me that I. sojourn in Meshek, and dwell in the tents of Kedar*, must needs deprecate that dismal state with their utmost vehemency of spirit, wherein they should be everlastingly yok'd with Sin, and coopt up with unclean sinners, both which they loath so perfectly. It was the speech of a gracious woman, when on the very marches of death, *O Lord, send me not to hell among such filthy company, which thou knowest I have not liked on earth*. But as for those that can fadge very well with their lusts, and the company of the wicked here, I know not how they can thus deprecate that place, where they shall meet with that which pleaseth them so much on earth. *David*, *Psal. 26.* first protests his

abhorreny against the wayes and society of the wicked, *vers. 4, 5.* *I have not sate with vain persons, neither will I go with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked*: then his zeal for God, and delight he had in his house to praise and serve him, *vers. 6, 7, 8.* after which, he breaks out into this prayer, *vers. 9.* *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. As if he had said, I am not of their knot in my life, O let me not be of their bundle at my death. I have praised thee on earth, send me not to blaspheme thee in hell. I have loved the habitation of thy house, let me not dwell with unclean spirits hereafter.*

Secondly, Hell is a state of separation from the blisful preence of God, pray to be delivered from it under this notion, as it is the last, yea, everlasting excommunication of the creature from God. *Goye cursed*, that is, never to see my sweet face more, called therefore *outer darkness*, because not the least beam or stricture of his favour to enlighten the souls of the damned, nor the least crevice is left open for hope to expect it. The heat of hell fire is not so dismal, as the want of this light, this makes them cursed, *Goye cursed*; the curse lies in their departure from God, the fountain of blessing, all besides this were tolerable; would God cast but one kind look upon those miserable souls, as they swim in this lake of fire and brimstone, it were able to change the property of the place, and the joy thereof were enough to take away the sense of their torment. The three Worthies in *Daniel* could walk in the fire, having God to bear them company, as if they had been only in the Sun-shine. That which a Saint prizeth most in heaven is the preence of God, *1 Thess. 4. 17.* *So shall we be ever with the Lord*; and hell is most dreaded by them, because a gulph is fixed between the souls in it and God, that no communion can be had with him to all eternity. O how few pray against hell under this notion! how few cry out with *David*, *Cast me not away from thy presence? Psal. 51.* If this were the thing above all they feared should befall them in the other world, would they so willingly live without acquaintance with God in this world? surely no.

Thirdly, Hell is a state, wherein the damn'd can never actually satisfie Gods justice; for their debt being infinite, and they (because creatures) but finite, will ever be paying, but the last farthing can never be paid, which is the only reason they lie for ever in prison, because it can never be said, Now God hath his due. But Christ, the Saints paymaster, discharged their whole debt at once, and took in the bond, which he nailed to his cross, leaving no back-reckoning unpaid, to bring the believer afterward into any danger from the hands of divine justice. Now as an ingenious debtor desires his freedom at his creditors hands, that thereby he may be capable of paying his debt, as well as to escape the misery that himself should endure by his imprisonment: So an ingenious soul (and such is every Saint) deprecates hell, as well with an eye to Gods glory, as to his own ease and happiness. Lord, saith the sincere soul, if thou packest me away to hell, there I shall pay thee ('tis true) by my just torments

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something in a dribbling way by retail, but never be able to discharge the whole sum; but at Christs hands thou maist receive to the full, what thy justice can demand at mine, and also make me thy poor creature a trumpeter of thy praise to eternity. O send

me not to blaspheme thee among that wretched crew of damned souls and unclean spirits, who so much desire to joyn with the Quire of Holy Angels and Saints, in singing Hallelujahs to thy holy and glorious Name.

CHAP. LV.

Of Imprecatory Prayer, and how to be performed.

THe third Branch in petitionary prayer, is Imprecation. A kind of prayer this is, wherein the Christian imprecates the vengeance of God upon the enemies of God and his people; on such a sad and solemn errand are the Saints prayers sometimes sent to Heaven, and speed as effectually, as when they go to obtain blessings for themselves and the Church of God. And no wonder, for they are perfumed with Christs merits, and thereby are as acceptable to God as any other they put up in his Name. *Rev. 8. 4. And the smoak of the incense which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God;* now what kind of prayers these were, is clear by the next words, *vers. 5. And the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an Earth-quake.* By which is signified the dreadful judgements, which God in answer to his Saints prayers would bring upon the wicked world, whose bloody persecutions of the Church, and fury against the truth of God, made the Saints to cry to Heaven for vengeance upon them; and it should inevitably come, as thunder, lightning, and earth-quakes, that can be resisted by no power or policy of the greatest Monarch on Earth. Thus as at the firing of some Cannon planted against a City, you may see its turrets or wall come tumbling down; so upon the prayers of the Saints, great judgements were certainly to befall the enemies of God and his Church. Now the path wherein the Christian is here to tread, being very narrow, he is to be the more cautious that he steps not awry. He is in this part of prayer which is imprecatory, like one that drives a Chariot on the brow of a steep hill, who if he have not the quicker eye and steadier hand may soon spoil all. The highest streins of the Saints duty, run nearest the most dangerous precipices, as the most mysterious truths are soonest perverted into the most damnable errors. I shall therefore first lay down a few particulars, which may serve as a rail to compass in this duty, for the better securing the Christian from falling into any miscarriage about it.

SECT. I.

First, Take heed thou dost not make thy private particular enemies the object of thy imprecation; we have no warrant when any wrong us, presently to go and call for fire from Heaven upon them. We are bid indeed to *heap coals upon our enemies heads*, but they are of love, not of wrath and revenge. *Job set*

a black brand upon this, and clears himself from the imputation of so great a sin, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul, Job 31. 31.* He durst not wish his enemy ill, much less deliberately form a wish into a prayer, and desire God to curse him. Our Saviour hath taught us a more excellent way, *Matth. 5. 44. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.* I know this is counted a poor sheepish spirit by many of our gallants; go pray for them? no lead them the glove rather, and be revenged on them in a duel by shedding their blood. This is the drink-offering which these sons of pride delight to pour out to their revenge; or curse them to the pit of Hell with their God-damn them oaths. O tremble at such a spirit as this! The ready way to fetch a curse from Heaven on thy self, is to imprecate one sinfully upon another, *Psal. 109. 18. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and into his bones like oyl.* Moses I suppose had as noble a spirit as any of these that stile them such men of honor, yet did he draw upon Aaron, or fall a cursing of Miriam, when they had used him so unworthily? I trow not, but bears all patiently; nay, when God declares his displeasure against Miriam for this affront put upon him, see how this holy man intercedes for her with God, *Numb. 12.* This is valor of the right make, to overcome evil with good, and instead of seeking revenge on him that wrongs us, to get the mastery of our own corruption so far as to desire his good the more. Thus our Lord, when he was numbered amongst transgressors, even then interceded for the transgressors, *Isa. 53. 12.* that is, those very men which used him so bloodily, while they were digging his heart out of his body with their instruments of cruelty, then was he begging the life of their souls with his fervent prayers.

Secondly, When thou prayest against the enemies of God and his Church, direct thy prayers rather against their plots than person. Thus the Apostles, *And now Lord, behold their threatenings, Act. 4. 29.* not, Confound their persons, but, Behold their threatenings, and so they leave their case with the Lord to right it for them. So David, *2 Sam. 15. 31. O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness.* Indeed God did do more, he destroyed plot and plotter also, and in this sense the Saints may oft say with the Prophet, *Thou hast done terrible things we looked not for, and prayed not for, by pouring*

pouring out his vengeance on the persons, when they have only prayed against their wicked delings.

Thirdly, When praying against the persons of those that are open enemies to God and his Church, it is safest to pray indefinitely and in general; *Let them be confounded that hate Zion, Psal. 129.* because we know not who of them are implacable, and who not, and therefore cannot pray absolutely and peremptorily against particular persons. There may be an elect vessel for a time in open hostility against God and his Church, whom afterward God may consecrate to himself by converting grace, and so make him a holy vessel for the use of his Sanctuary. We do, 'tis confess, find some in Scripture prayed against by name, so *Moses* prayed against *Corah* and his complices, *Numb. 16.* and *Paul* against *Alexander the Coppersmith*, *The Lord reward him according to his works;* but these and other in Scripture had an extraordinary spirit, and not to be patterns for us in this case. *Elias* called for fire from Heaven upon the Captains, but the disciples were soundly chid for a preposterous imitation of his act, who had not this spirit, *Luke 9. Ye know not what spirit ye are of.* Pray thou for vengeance against all the implacable enemies of God, and leave him to direct thy arrow to its mark. *Abas* was hit, though the arrow was shot at a venture by one that may be thought not of him. Prayers are sorted in Heaven before their answer returns. Some of those *Emperours* for whom the Church in the primitive times prayed, yet proving implacable enemies to God and his people, felt the weight of those imprecations, which in general they put up against the adversaries of the truth.

Fourthly, In praying against the implacable enemies of God and his Church, the glory of God should be principally aimed at, and vengeance on them in order to that. *Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.* As the Sun when it hath dispelled the vapors that muffled it up from our sight, breaks out in the glory of its beams; so God, by taking vengeance on his enemies, and scattering them in their wicked imaginations, with which they endeavoured to obscure his glory in the world, doth display and make visible the splendor of his Attributes before his peoples eyes. The saddest consequence which attends the prosperity and success of Gods enemies in the world, is their pride and blasphemy against God, his Truth, and Church. Then they belch out their horrid blasphemies against Heaven, then they mock the poor Saints, and pierce them with the sharp sword of their mocking language, while they say unto them, *Where is now their God?* But when God takes to himself power and strength, and confounds these giants and sons of the earth, by tumbling destruction upon their heads in the midst of their wicked enterprises, when he recoils their own plots they have charged against his Church upon themselves, making them go off like a pistol in their pocket, to procure their own death and ruine. Now the reproach is taken off, and they have an answer given home to their question, *Where is now your God?* He is at their throat, he is with his sword of vengeance vindicating his glorious Name upon them. When *Julian the Apostate* was slain (and confess at whose hand he

received his fatal blow, in crying, *Vicisti Galilee*) then *Libanius*, his scoffing Sophister, had his question; *What is the Carpenters Son now a doing?* (which a little before he had put to a Christian in scorn of his Saviour) thrown in his teeth to the confusion of his face, and found the Christians answer (that he was making a Coffin for his master) prov'd truer than he was aware of. It cannot but be a joyful day to a Saint, that prizeth the honour of his God above his own life, when he sees even the wicked (that before denied a Providence, and thought all events were thrown out of blind fortunes lap, as if the world were but a Lottery, wherein every one had his portion by chance,) now forced, by the remarkable appearances of his power and wisdom, in saving his people, and destroying his implacable enemies, to confess, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth, Psal. 58. 11.* This exaltation of the glorious Name of God, every Saint doth and should aim at in the prayers wherein he imprecates vengeance, *Psal. 83. 17. Let them be confounded, let them be put to shame and perish; That men may know, that thou whose Name alone is JEHOVAH art the most high over all the Earth.*

SECT. II.

Now from this head of Imprecatory Prayer, there is

First, Matter of comfort to the Saints against those direful imprecations which the wicked world belcheth out against them. The Saints in this fence are a cursed people. The wicked make the greatest part of the world, the Church is a little flock, but her enemies a huge herd; and these cannot wish well to the Saints. *Cain* (as *Luther* saith) will hate and kill *Abel* to the end of the world, the same spirit that was in him remaineth in his seed. Sometimes when the Church of God flourisheth, and hath the Sun of ourward prosperity on her side, they may cry *Hosanna* in the crowd, (as *Shimei* when *David* was going up the hill of honor, then he could worship the rising Sun, and crouch to him whom he had bitterly cursed in his distress) *But when they bless with the mouth, they curse inwardly with their heart, Psal. 65. 4.* A wicked man cannot wish well to a Saint, as a Saint; as on the contrary, a Saint cannot bless the wicked as such; *Pf. 129. 8. Neither do they which go by, say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you, we bless you in the name of the Lord.* They do indeed desire their conversion, and therein wish them well, but in the wicked way they are in at present they cannot bless them: So the wicked can desire the Saints would come over to their party, do as they do, and then they would applaud and hug them: But let the Saints keep close to God, and refuse to run into riot and excess with them, and they are sure to meet with their curse and imprecation; it is not their unblameable and peaceable walking will free them from their wrath and fury. *Jer. 15. 10. I have neither lent to usury, nor have men lent to me on usury, yet everyone of them doth curse me.* But fear not thou, who art a Saint, their imprecations, this is but *Anathema secundum dici*, like false fire in the pan of an uncharged gun, it gives a crack but hurts not; Gods

Gods blessing will cover thee from their curse, *Psal.* 109. 28. *Let them curse, but bless thou.* When the Viper flew out of the fire upon *Paul's* hand, the *Barbarians* look'd that he should presently drop down dead, but it proved no such matter. Thus the enemies of God and his people have look'd one generation after another, when the Church, that hath been alwaies laden with their curses, should perish under them, but it lives yet to walk over the graves of all those that have wish'd it ill. Alas poor wretches! what is your imprecation worth? Truly as your blessing can do no good, so neither your curse any hurt, till you can get God to set his seal, and say Amen to it, which is impossible for you to obtain. Did our Saviour so sharply rebuke the rash request of his Disciples, calling for fire to fall on them, whom they thought deserved it? and will he gratifie the lust of your devilish wrath and fury against his own dear people, by pouring on them what you audaciously, yea, blasphemously, desire of him? Will nothing serve you but to have God your executioner to hang whom you condemn? and those no other than his dear children, and for nought else but because they dare not be as wicked as your selves? Go bid the tender mother imbrue her hands in the blood of her sweet babe, that even now came out of her womb, and now lies at her breast; or the husband betray and deliver the wife of his bosome into the hands of murderers, that wait for her life; would these be an errand to make the messenger that brings them welcome to loving mother or husband? But if any such anomalies in natures grammar, and monsters among men were to be found, yet remember he is a God thou soliciteest, whose Nature is unchangeable, and Covenant with his people inviolable. How was God courted by *Balak*, and *Balaam* with altar after altar, from place to place? but all to no purpose; *Deut.* 23. 5. *Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam, but the Lord*

thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee. Never was any design carried on with more zeal and passionate desire to effect it, than this; one would think that God had said enough to *Balaam* at first, to make him sick of his enterprize, as a thing infeasible, *Numb.* 22. 12. *Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.* But he liked the work, and loved the wages, and therefore baffles his conscience, not telling the messengers all that God said to him, and they also report not all to *Balak*, what *Balaam* said to them, so loth were both the work should fall: yet we see by the event, that they took but pains to lose their labour, nay worse, to lose themselves; for God made them, and him that set them on this work, to drink the curse, which they would so fain have brewed for *Israel*.

Secondly, A word to the wicked. Take heed that by your implacable hatred to the truth and Church of God, you do not engage her prayers against you. The imprecatory prayers of the Saints, when shot at the right mark, and duly put up, they are murdering pieces, and strike dead where they light. *Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily,* *Luk.* 18. 7, 8. They are not empty words, (as the imprecations of the wicked) poured into the air, and there vanish with their breath, but are received into heaven, and shall be sent back with thunder and lightning upon the pates of the wicked. *David's* prayer unravell'd *Abiophel's* fine-spun policy, and twisted his halter for him. The prayers of the Saints are more to be feared (as once a great person said and felt) than an Army of twenty thousand men in the field. *Esther's* Fast hastned *Haman's* ruine, and *Hezekiah's* against *Senacherib* brought his huge host to the slaughter, and fetch'd an Angel from Heaven to do the execution in one night upon them.

CHAP. LVI.

Of Gratulatory Prayer, what is to be the subject of our Thanksgiving.

THE second kind of prayer in this last division is Thanksgiving, in handling whereof I shall still keep my former method. First, Shew what we are to return praises and thanks for : Secondly, How we are to frame our thanksgivings we return.

First, What we are to praise and thank God for. Now the object of *Thanksgiving* (as of request) is something that is good, but under another notion ; we ask what we want, we blefs and praise God for the mercies we have received, or for the hope we have from the promise that we shall in due time receive them. So that we see the Christian hath as large a field for the exercise of his thankfulness in praising God, as he hath in the petitionary part of prayer for his desires. This duty circumscribes heaven and earth, it takes both worlds within its circumference. As God does nothing, but he aims at his own glory thereby, *Prov. 16. 4.* so no act of God towards his people, wherein he intends not their good, and as such becomes the subject of their thanksgiving. Hence we are bid, *In every thing give thanks.* O what a copious theme hath God given his people to enlarge their meditations upon ! *In every thing.* The whole course and series of divine providence towards the Saints is like a Musick-book, in every leaf whereof there is a song ready prick'd for them, to learn and sing to the praise of their God ; no passage in their life of which they can say, In this I received no mercy for which I should blefs God. Now as a partial obedience is not good, so partial thanks is stark naught ; not that any Saint is able to keep all the commands, or reckon up all the mercies of God, much less return particular and expresse acknowledgement for every single mercy ; but as he hath respect to all the commandments, *Psal. 119. 6.* so he desires to value highly every mercy, and to his utmost power give God the praise of all his mercies, *Psal. 116.* *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me ?* This is an honest soul indeed, he would not sink any debt he owes to God, but calls his soul to an account for all his benefits, not this or that. The skipping over one note in a Lesson may spoil the grace of the Musick, unthankfulness for one mercy disparageth our thanks for the rest. But to sort the mercies of God into several ranks, that you may see more distinctly your work in this duty lie before you.

First, Mercies are either ordinary or extraordinary ; our every-day commons, or exceedings, with which God now and then feasts us. Thou must not only praise God for some extraordinary mercy, which once in a year betides thee, a mercy that comes with such pomp and observation, that all thy neighbours take notice of it with thee, as the mercy which *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* had in their son, that was noised about all the Countrey, *Luk. 1. 65.* but

also for ordinary, every-day mercies ; for first, we are unworthy of the least mercy, *Gen. 32. 10.* and therefore God is worthy of praise for the least, because it is more than he owes us. Secondly, These common ordinary mercies are many. Thus *David* enhanceth the mercies of this kind, *O God, how great is the sum of them ? if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand ; when I awake I am still with thee, Psal. 139. 18.* as if he had said, There is not a point of time wherein thou art not doing me good ; as soon as I open mine eyes in the morning, I have a new theme in some fresh mercies given in since I closed them overnight to employ my praiseful meditations. Many little items make together a great sum. What less than a grain of sand, yet what heavier than the sand on the Sea-shore ? As little sins, such as are vain thoughts and idle words, because of their multitude, arise to a great guilt, and will bring in a long bill, a heavy reckoning at last ; so ordinary mercies, what they want in their size (particularly and individually considered) of some other greater mercies, they have it compensated in their number. Who will not say that a man shews as great, yea, greater kindness, to maintain one at his table with ordinary fare all the year, as in entertaining him at a great feast twice or thrice in the same time ? Thirdly, The sincerity of the heart is seen more in thankfulness for ordinary mercies than extraordinary. As it shews a naughty heart upon every ordinary occasion to fall into a sin, so the soul very gracious that takes the hint of every common mercy to blefs his God. Some they are so bound up in their spirits, that none but strong physick will work upon them ; they can digest little afflictions, and swallow ordinary mercies, without humbling themselves under the one, or praising God for the other. That is the upright heart which gentle physick prevails with, little chastisements humble, and ordinary mercies raise to thankfulness.

Secondly, Mercies are compleat, or imperfect ; begun mercies, or finished. We must not make God stay for our praises till he hath finished a mercy, but praise him at the beginning of a mercy ; we should be as ready to return our praises for a mercy, as God is to hear our prayers when begging a mercy. Now God comes forth early to meet a praying soul, *At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, Dan. 9. 23.* *I said I would confess my transgression, and thou forgavest, Psal. 32.* Thus should we echo in our thankfulness to the first intimation, that God gives in his providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear the King is on the Road toward your Town, you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entred the gates. The birds they rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising-Sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our Harps

in praising God at the first appearance of a mercy. Notable instances we have for this, *Moses* did not promise God, when he had saved them from *Pharaoh's* wrath, and the seas waves, that at his landing them safe in *Canaan*, and lodging his victorious colours at the end of their journey in their full rest, then he would praise him for all his mercies together; no, but he presently pens a Song, and on the bank, within sight of the howling wilderness, which they were now to enter into, he sings it with *Israel* in thankfulness for this first hanfel after their march out of *Egypt*. So, 2 Sam. 6. 12, 13. *And it was so, that when they that bare the Ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.* And 1 Chron. 15. 26. which is a place parallel to this, and speaks of the same passage, *When God helped the Levites that bare the Ark, they offered seven bullocks and seven rams*; that is, So soon as by going a few paces or steps, they perceived God graciously to favour their enterprise, (making no breach as formerly he had done upon them) they presently express their thankfulness upon the place, for this hopeful beginning, well knowing no way was better to engage God in the continuance and enlargement of his mercy, than by a praiseful entertainment thereof at its first approach. In a word, Thus the *Jews* in *Babylon*, at the very first peep of day, when their deliverance began to break out, are at their praises, *Psal.* 126. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.* It was now but coming-tyde (as I may say) with them, the water was newly turn'd, and their affairs began to look with a more smiling face; yet now they salute their infant mercy with joy and thankfulness. May be Christian, thou art upon a sick-bed, and some little reviving thou hast, though far from thy former health; O blefs God for this little lift of thy head from thy pillow. May be thou hast been, as to thy spiritual state, in great distress, (as it were in the belly of Hell) swallowed up with terrors from the Lord, but now thy agony abates, though the comforter be not come, yet thou hast some strictures of Divine light let into thy dungeon, that raise a little hope to wait for more; O let not this hanfel of mercy pass without some thankful acknowledgement. Some alas are like great ships, that cannot be set afloat but with the spring-tide and high-water of a mercy compleated; if they have not all they would, they cannot see what they have, nor tune their hearts into a praiseful frame.

Thirdly, Mercies are such as are received in this life, or reserved for the next; mercies in hand, or mercies in hope. There are promises which God will have us stay till we come to heaven for the performance of; and these we are to praise God for as well as what we receive here; blefs God for what he hath laid up for thee in heaven, as well as that he lays out upon thee on Earth. The more our hearts

are enlarged in thankfulness for these mercies, which we now have only in hope, the more honor we put upon his faithful promise. He that bestows much cost upon a house he hath in reversion, shews his confidence is great one-day to be possessed of it. When a Bill of Exchange is paid at sight, it shews the Merchant whose it is, to be a man of credit and ability. By the joy thou takest up, and the thankfulness thou layest out for what the bare promise tells thee thou shalt at death receive, thou glorifiest the truth of God that is the promiser.

Fourthly, There are bitter mercies and sweet mercies; some mercies God gives in wine, some in wormwood: Now we must praise God for the bitter mercies as well as the sweet; thus *Job*, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Too many are prone to think, nothing is a mercy that is not sweet in the going down, and leaves not a pleasant farewell on their palate; but this is the childishness of our spirits, which as grace grows more manly, and the Christian more judicious, will wear off. Who, that understands himself, will value a book by the gilt on the cover? Truly none of our temporals (whether crosses or enjoyments) considered in themselves abstractly, are either a curse or mercy; they are only as the covering to the book, it is what is writ in them that must resolve us whether they be a mercy or not. Is it an affliction that lies on thee? if thou canst find it comes from love, and ends in grace and holiness, it is a mercy though it be bitter to thy taste. Is it an enjoyment? if love doth not send it, and grace end it, (which appears when thou growest worse by it) it is a curse though sweet to thy sense. There are sweet poisons as well as bitter cordials. The Saints commonly have greater advantage from their afflictions in the world, than enjoyments of the world; their eyes are oftner enlightened with wormwood than hony; those dispensations that are bitter and displeasing to sense, than those that are sweet and luscious.

Fifthly, Mercies are either personal, or such as we receive in partnership with others, and these must be recognized as well as the other. *Pardon, O God,* (said He) *my other mens sins.* Thus *Blessed be God* (say Thou) *for my other mens mercies.* Haply, Christian, thou hast prayed for a sick friend, and he is restored to health; for another in distress of spirit, and the Comforter at last is come to him. Now thou who hadst an adventure in his Bottom, hast a mercy also in the return that is made to him, and therefore art to blefs God with him. He that prays for his friend, and joyns not with him in thankfulness when the mercy is given, is like one that is a means to bring his friend into debt, but takes no care to help him out. Thy friend (Christian) needs thy aid much more to pay the thanks, than to borrow the mercy, because this is the harder work of the two. But above all mercies to others, be sure Church mercies and Nation-mercies be not forgot.

CHAP. LVII.

Four Directions how to frame our Thanksgivings.

YOU have heard what is the subject of our praises and thanksgivings. We come now to the second thing promised, to lay down some rules how we are to frame our thanksgivings.

SECT. I.

First, Be sure the thing thou praifest God for, be found among the good things of the promise, that is the compass by which we are to steer our course, as in the Petitionary, so also in the Gratulatory part of prayer, if it be not in the Promise it is not a mercy, and so not the subject of thanksgiving. When some prosper in their wickedness, they are so bold as to thank God they sped so well. Now if it be a grievous sin for a man to bless himself in any wicked way, *Deut. 29. 19.* much more horrid is it to bless God for prospering therein; by the former he only voucheth his own sin, (which indeed is bad enough) but by the other he makes God a party with him, and tempts the Lord to own it also. 'Tis a good speech of Bernard to this purpose, who comparing those that on the one hand thank God for their success in wickedness, with hypocrites, who praise him for the good things they receive, saith, *Isti impie mala suo Deo, isti Dei bona fraudulentè inorquent sibi, Serm. 45. super Cant.* The one impute their sin to God, the other ascribe the glory of his mercies to themselves. God cannot accept thy praise, unless he first approve thy fact. He that receives a bribe is guilty of the fault. And dare you thus tempt the only One? If the God you serve were like the Heathens Idols, the matter were not much. When the Philistims had practised their cruelty on Saul, they present his head to their God. The Devil desires no better sacrifices than the fruit of mens sins. But the holy One of Israel abhors all wicked praises, *The hire of a whore was not to be offered, Deut. 23. 18.*

Secondly, Let all your praises be offered up in Christ, *Heb. 13. 15.* By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God. *1 Pet. 2. 5.* Ye are an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Couldst thou pen never so rare a Panegyrick, couldst thou flourish it with never so much art or rhetorick, and deliver it with the greatest passion and zeal possible, all this would be harsh, and grate the Almighty's ear, except sounded through Christ. 'Tis not the breath poured into the open air, but passing through the Trumpet or some other Instrument (where it is formed into a tunable sound) that makes it pleasing Musick. Possibly when thou prayest for a mercy, thou shelterest thy self under Christs wing, and usest his Name to procure thy admission (because conscious of thine own unworthiness to receive what thou askest) but when thou praifest God, thy errand being not to beg and receive, but to give, thou expectest welcome: He that

brings a present shall surely find the door open; Yes, if thy gift were suitable to the great God: But who art thou that the great God should take a present at thy hand? If thou beest not worthy of the least mercy thou beggest, then surely thou art unworthy of this honour to have thy thank-offering accepted. Thou needest Christs mediation for the one as much as for the other.

Thirdly, Stay not in generals, but descend to the particular instances of Gods mercy towards thee in thy thanksgivings. *Est dolus in generalibus.* It bewrays a sleighty spirit (if not a false) when in confession of sin we content our selves with a general inditement, I am a sinner, a great sinner, and there to stop without a particular sense of the several breaches made in the Law of God. Neither is it here a better symptom, when a man puts God off with a complement at distance for his goodness and mercy in general, but takes no notice of the particular Items which swell and make up the total sum. Now to be able to do this, it will be necessary that thou takest special notice of Gods daily providence to thee and thine, yea, and to the Church of Christ also; lay up these in thy heart (as Mary did our Saviours words) for matter of thanksgiving against the time of prayer; this is true good husbandry for thy soul. You do not expect to find that money in your chest, which you never laid up there; neither will you readily find in your heart to praise God for those mercies, which you never committed to your memory. 'Tis to be feared, the man means not to pay that debt honestly, which he doth not set down in his book. *Psal. 107.* when the Psalmist there, stirred them up to thankfulness for the mercies of God in creation and providence, his conclusion is worthy of remark, *Who so is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord;* as if he had said, The reason why so little praise is given for such great works of mercy, is, because men see not the loving kindness of God in them; and they see not this, because they observe not those; and they observe not those, 'cause they have not wisdom. 'Tis not a Library makes a Scholar, but wisdom to observe and gather the choice notions out of his books. None want mercies to bless God for; Divine Providence is a large volume, writ thick and close with mercies from one end of our life to the other; but few alas have a heart to read in it, and fewer have wisdom to collect the choice passages of it for such a holy purpose as this is.

SECT. II.

Fourthly, Excite thy praising graces. David stirs up all that is within him to praise God, *Psa. 103.* that is, all the powers and graces of his soul. To instance but in two or three.

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First,

First, Humility; a proud man cannot well tell how to beg, yet selfishness may make him stoop to it; but in thankfulness he must needs be a bungler, for this is a high piece of self-denial. *Not unto us, nor unto us, but unto thy Name be the praise.* The proud mans gift will cleave to his hand, he is unfit to set the Crown on Gods head that hath a mind to wear it himself. We find indeed the tool in the *Pharisees* hand, but he cuts his work into chips; he seems to honour God with his mouth, but eats his words as he speaks them, and discovers plainly, that he intends more to exalt himself than God; *I thank God I am not as this Publican.* This, I thank God, comes in *pro forma*; 'tis the *Publican* that he disdains, and himself that he applauds. You may easily think what a look ambitious *Haman* gave *Mordecai*, when he held his stirrup, who desired himself to have been in the saddle. How alas can a proud heart give God that, which he covets himself? No man, saith *Luther*, can pray *sanctificetur nomen tuum*, till he first be able to pray, *profanetur nomen meum*, sanctified be thy Name, till he be willing his own name should be debased. Labour therefore to vilifie, nullifie thy self, then, and not till then, thou wilt magnifie, omnifie thy God. None so zealous in begging, as he that is most pinched with his want; none so hearty in his thanks, as he that hath most sense of his unworthiness; and who can think better of himself, that is thoroughly acquainted with himself? If God had not set thee up, what stock couldst thou have found of thy own? Thou wert as bare as a thorn sheep, naked camest thou into the world, and ever since thou hast been cast upon thy God, even as a poor child upon the charge of the Parish, what hast thou earned by all the service thou hast done him? not the bread of thy poorest meal. And art thou yet proud? *Bernard* compares *Josephs* carriage with his Master, and the grateful souls with God, thus together; *Joseph* (saith the Father) knew that his Master, who put all that he had into his hands, yet excepted his wife, and therefore accounted it too base an ingratitude to take her from his Masters bed, who had been so kind to him in his house. Thus, saith he, God freely gives his mercies into the S'ts hands, but excepts his Glory; therefore the gracious soul takes what God gives thankfully, but leaves the praise of them, which God reserves for himself, humbly.

Secondly, Love and Joy, *Amor & gaudium faciunt musicum*, Love and Joy ('tis said) make a musician. Indeed then this musick of praise is best (in Heaven I mean) where these graces are perfect. First, Love. This is an affection that cannot keep within door, but must be sailing forth in the praises of God. *Austin*, speaking of Heaven, breaks out thus, *Ibi uocabimus & uidebimus, uidebimus & amabimus, amabimus & laudabimus, laudabimus & cantabimus*. In heaven we shall have nothing to do but to behold the

face of God, and seeing him we shall love him, loving him we shall praise him, and praising we shall sing and rejoyce. Love and thankfulness are like the symbolical qualities of the elements, easily resolved into each other. *Psal. 116. 1. David* begins with, *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice*; and to enkindle this grace into a greater flame, he aggravates the mercies of God in some following verses, which done, then he is in the right cue for praises, & strikes up his instrument, *ver. 11. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* The Spouse, when once she was thoroughly awake, pondering with herself what a friend had been at her door, and how his sweet company was lost through her unkindness, shakes off her sloth, riseth, and away she goes after him; now when with running after her beloved, she had put her soul into a heat of love, then she breaks out into an *Encomium* of her Beloved, praising him from top to toe, *Cant. 5. 10.* That is the acceptable praising which comes from a warm heart, and he that would warm his heart, must use some holy exercise to stir up his habit of love, which like natural heat in the body, is preserved and increased by motion.

Secondly, Excite thy Joy, *Psal. 63. 5. I will sing with joyful lips*. A sad heart and a thankful hardly can dwell together, I mean, sad with worldly sorrow. The Disciples for sorrow could not hold open their eyes to pray, much more sure were they unfit to praise; this indeed makes the duty of praise and thanksgiving more difficult than to pray, because our joy here is so often quenched and interrupted with intervening sins and sorrows, that this heavenly fire seldom burns long clear on the Christians Altar, from which his praise should ascend. Temptations and afflictions, they both drive the soul to prayer, and more dispose it for prayer; but they untune his instrument for praise. *Hannah* she wept and prayed, but durst not eat of the Peace-offering, the sacrifice of praise, because she wept. It behoves us therefore the more to watch our hearts, lest they be indisposed by any affliction for this duty. Do with thy soul as the Musician in wet weather doth with his instrument, which he hangs not in a moist nasty room, but where it may have the air of the fire. Art thou under affliction, let not thy soul pore too long on those thy troubles, but bring it within the scent of Gods mercies that are intermingled with them. Sit near this fire of Gods love in Christ, warm thy heart with meditation on spiritual promises, while thou art under bodily pressures, and thou shalt find through Gods blessing thy heart in some comfortable tune to praise God, in the saddest and most rainy day that can befall thee in all thy life. Thus *David* could make musick in the Cave, *Psal. 57. 7. My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, O God, I will sing and give praise.*

CHAP. LVIII.

Four more Rules to be observed in the duty of Thanksgiving.

Fifthly, Content not thy self with a bare narrative, but give every mercy its proper accent, according to the enhancing circumstances thereof. There is great difference in two that sing the same song, from one you have only the plain song, the other descants and runs division upon it, in which consists the grace of the Musick. The mercies of God affect our hearts, as they are dressed forth, if we put on them their rich habiliments, the circumstances I mean that advance them, they appear glorious to our eyes, and enlarge our hearts in praises for them; but considered without these, we pass them slightly. God himself, when he would express the height of his love to his people, presents them to his own eye, not as now they are, but as clothed with the glory he intends them. *Isa. 52. 6. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall the Lord rejoice over thee.* At the wedding-day, the best cloaths are put on. Thus do thou, to draw out thy thankfulness for mercies, consider them in those circumstances that may render them most glorious in thine eye. Some Emperours have not suffered every one to draw their picture, lest they should be disfigured by their bungling pencil. Truly slighty praises disfigure the lovely face of Gods mercy, they are but few that draw them to the life; to do this, much study and meditation are requisite. *The works of the Lord are sought out of them that have pleasure in them.* The curious Limner studies the face of the man before he makes his draught. Praise is a work not done in a trice; the Lesson must be prick'd before it can be sung; read therefore the Word, and learn from the Saints there recorded, what aggravating circumstances they have observed in recognizing their mercies; sometimes we have them setting the accent upon the speedy return of their prayers; *In the day that I cryed thou answeredst me, Psal. 128.* this is a print that super-adds a further excellency to the mercy; it was but knock, and have; come, and be served. While the Church were at Gods door praying for Peter's deliverance, Peter is knocking at theirs to tell them their prayer is heard. Sometimes from the sinful infirmities which mingled with their prayers; now that mercy should come with a notwithstanding these, and steal upon them when they had hardly faith to wait for them, this hath exceedingly endeared the goodness of God to them. *I said in my haste, all men are liars. What shall I return unto the Lord for all his benefits? Psal. 116.* Sometimes from the greatness of their strait, *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. Oh taste and see how good the Lord is! Psal. 34.* So, *Psal. 136. Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Indeed this must needs raise high appreciating thoughts of the mercy. The water that God gave Israel out of the rock is

called Honey, because it came in their extream want, and so was as sweet to them as honey. Silver is gold when given to a poor man that must else have dyed for lack of bread. Sometimes from the frequent returns of Gods goodness, and expressions of his care; *Thy mercies are new every morning, Lam. 13. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, yet have they not prevailed, Psal. 121. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, 1 Sam. 7. 12.* This gives such an accent, as without it the mercy cannot be pronounced with its due emphasis. A course of sin is worse than an act of sin, *Jer. 23. 10. Their course is evil.* So a course of mercy from time to time, speaks more love. Some that could bereave a single almes on a beggar, would beat him from their door, should he lie often there, and make it a trade. Sometimes from the peculiarity of the mercy, they take notice of the distinction God makes in issuing out of his favours, *Psal. 147. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord. Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not to the world? Joh. 14. 22.* Let these few hints suffice to set thee on work to find out the others; without this, we rob God of the best part of our sacrifice, as if a Jew had stript off the fat, and laid the lean on Gods altar; or as he did by his Idol, who took off the cloak of silver it had, and put on his own threadbare one in the room of it. The mercies thou receivest are great and rich, give not him thy beggarly praises; He expects they should bear some proportion to his mercy, *Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness, Psal. 150. 2.*

S E C T. II. Distinguish between mercy and mercy; let the choicest mercies have the highest praises. It shews a naughty heart to howl and make a great noise in prayer for corn and wine; and in the mean time to be indifferent or faint in his desires for Christ and his grace; nor better is it, when one acknowledges the goodness of God in temporals, but takes little notice of those greater blessings which concern another life. You shall have sometimes a covetous Earth-worm speak what a blessed time and season it is for the corn and the fruits of the earth, (these fit his carnal palate, as the pottage did Esau's) but you never hear him express any feeling sense of the blessed seasons of grace, the miracle of Gods patience, that such a wretch as he is out of hell so long, the infinite love of God in offering Christ by the Gospel to him; he turns over these as a child doth a book, till he hits on some gaud and picture, and there he stays to gaze. Christ and his grace, with other spiritual blessings he skills not of, he cares not

SECT. II.

for, except they would fill his bags and barns. Now, shall such a one pass for a thankful man? will God accept his praises for Earth, that rejects Heaven? that takes corn and wine with thanks, and bids him keep Christ to himself with scorn? saying as *Esau*, when his brother offered him his present, *I have enough? A gracious heart is of another strain, Ephes. 1. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places by Christ.* Indeed God gives temporals to make us in love with spirituals, yea, with himself that gives them; as the Sutor sends the token to gain the love of the person. Again, As we are to distinguish between mercy and mercy, so even in these lower mercies that concern this life, be sure thou layest the accent of thy thankfulness on the spiritual part of them. In every outward mercy, there is food for the flesh, and food for the spirit; that which pleaseth the sense, and that which may exercise our grace. Is it health? the carnal heart is taken most with it, as it brings the joy of his natural life to him, which sickness deprived him of. But that which above all pleaseth a Saint, is the opportunity that comes with it for his glorifying God in his place and generation; *Psal. 42. 11. I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Is it an estate that God calls in? the carnal wretch values it for his private accommodation, as if it were given for no higher end than to spend it upon himself, or enrich his family. But the gracious blesteth God that gives him to give to the necessity of others, and counts a large heart to be a greater mercy than a full purse. *David* did not bless himself in his abundance, but bless God that gave him a heart to refund it again into the bosom of God, from whom he received it; *1 Chron. 29. 14. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?*

Seventhly, Let not thy praises be transient, a fit of Musick, and then the instrument hung by the wall, till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God will not sit at such a niggards table, who invites him to a Thank-giving-feast once for all the year. God comes not guest-wise to his Saints house, but to dwell with them, *He inhabits the praises of his people, Psal. 22. 3. That day thou blestest not God, thou turnst him out of doors.* *David* took this up for a life-work, *As long as I live will I praise thee. A lying tongue is but for a moment, saith Solomon, Prov. 12. 19. Something drops from a liar within a while that discovers his falshood; the tongue that lies in praising of God, is thus for a moment, he can curse God with that tongue to morrow with which he praiseth him to day.*

Eighthly, Thou must not only continue, but grow in thy praises; as the tide encreaseth, the ship is lift higher on the waters; as your crop encreaseth, your barns are enlarged; as you grow richer, you advance in your garb and port; in a word, as your bodies grow, so you make your cloathes bigger. Every day swells the tide of your mercies, adds to your heap, encreases your treasure, and heightens your stature; *They are new (saith the Prophet) every morning, Lam. 3. 23. they grow whether thou sleepest or wakest.* Now as the coat thou didst wear, when thou wert a child, would not become thee now thou art a man; so neither will the garment of praise, which thou didst cloath thy soul with when a young convert, become thee now thou art an old Disciple; thou standest deeper in Gods books than before, and God expects according to what every man hath received. Your selves are not so bad husbands, but you would improve your estates to the height; Would you let a Farm now by the rate it bare forty or fifty years ago? why then may not God raise the rent of his mercies also? Look back, Christian, and see how well the world is mended with thee since thou didst first set up; may be thou canst say with *Jacob, I passed over with my staff, and behold now I am become two bands.* Well, see what thou hast more in health, estate, in gifts, graces or comforts than thou hadst formerly, and then compare thy present thankfulness with what it was before these additions were made to thy stock and treasure; would it not be a shame to thee, if it should be found not to have grown, as the goodness of God to thee hath done, much more if it hath shrunk and grown less? And yet how common are such instances of ingratitude? The freer God is of his mercy, the more close and gripple they are in their thankful returns; when poor, they could be thankful for a short meal of course fare, more than they are now for their varieties and dainties. When sick, a few broken sleeps that amounted to an hour or two rest in a night, O how affected were their hearts for this mercy? whereas now they can rise and take little notice of the goodness of God, that gives them their full rest night after night without interruption. Thus as the days lengthen, so the cold strengthens: But is it not strange to see a man grow colder in his love to God, as the Sun of Gods mercy riseth higher, and shines hotter upon him? O 'tis sad to see the heap encrease, and the heart waste; to see a man grow richer in mercy, and poorer in thankfulness.

CHAP. LIX.

The two last Directions concerning the Duty of Thanksgiving.

Ninthly, Let thy praises be real. Words we say pay no debts. There goes more to thankfulness than a mouthful of windy praises, which pass away with the sound they make. A gracious heart is too wise to think God will be put off with a song, he will give God that, but it is the least he intends. *The Lord is my strength and song, and I will prepare him an habitation, Exod. 15. 2.* Ay, here it sticks, building is chargeable; thankfulness is a costly work: *Shall I offer to God that which cost me nothing? saith David to Araunah.* Cheap praises are easily obtained, but when it comes to charges, then many grow sick of the work. The Jews could sing a song when delivered from Babylon, *Psal. 121.* but it was long before they could find in their hearts to build God an habitation, the time was not come for that; they might have said, their heart was not come; they had money and time enough to build their own nests, but none for God, though herein they played the fools egregiously, for as fast as they built at one end, God pulled down at the other. Some have been of their mind in our times, instead of finding God a habitation, and loving our Nation to build Synagogues, they have pulled them down, and carried the beams to their own houses. Excellent Artifts, in taking down Ministers, Ministry, and their maintenance, whereby the Gospel should be upheld! If this be the way to thrive, God gave his people but ill counsel, when he said, *Consider now from this day I will bless you, Hag. 3.* But you will ask what I mean by real praises?

SECT. I.

First then, our praises are real when they are cordial: *All that is within me bless his holy Name, Psal. 103.* When his mercies beget amiable, high, and honourable thoughts of God in our hearts. We read of *cursing God in the heart, Psal. 106. 1.* which then is done, when we have base, low, unbecoming thoughts of his greatness and goodness; and on the contrary, when the mercies of God imprint such an image in the heart of him, as livelily represents these his attributes, then thou blest God in thy heart, by adoring his Majesty, reverencing his Holiness, delighting in his Love, and fearing his goodness; here is real thankfulness. What is *law or honour*, but a reflection of the persons excellency we commend? Now as the glass represents the image of the person that looks on it, so the thankful soul reflects those glorious Attributes again upon God, which he puts forth in his mercies. Thus God sees his face in a true glass, which the thankful soul holds up while he praiseth him. Whereas an unthankful heart, like a broken glass, distorts and disfigures the beautiful face of God, by conceiving such low thoughts of God, as are unworthy of his glorious Attributes.

Secondly, When our praises are obediential. God accounts those mercies forgotten which are not written with legible characters in our lives. *Pf. 106. 21. They forgot God their Saviour.* That of *Joshua* is observable, *chap. 8. 32.* upon their victory over the City Ai, an Altar is built as a monument of that signal mercy; now mark, what doth God command to be writ or engraved on the stones thereof? One would have thought the History of that days work should have been the Sculpture, but it is the copy of the Law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel, *vers. 32.* whereby he plainly shewed, the best way of remembering the mercy, was, not to forget to keep the Law. Saul could not blind Samuels eyes with his many good-morrows, that the people saved the best of the Cattel for sacrifice; *Hath the Lord (saith he) as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying his voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to obey than the fat of Lambs, 1 Sam. 15. 22.* as if he had said, What, Saul, thinkest thou to bribe God with a sacrifice, while thou art disobedient to his command? dost thou take the Swan, and stick the feather in the room? deny him thine own heart to obey his word, and give him a beasts heart in sacrifice for it? Is this the oblation which he hath required, or will accept? Truly God riseth hungry from our Thanksgiving-dinners, if obedience be not a dish at the table; without this, we and our sacrifices may burn together. God will pluck such from the horns of the Altar, and take them off their knees with their hypocritical praises, to pay his debt in another kind. *If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, Isa. 1. 19.* Then, and not till then, will God eat of your sacrifices, and your selves taste the sweetness of your enjoyments. *He meets him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, Isa. 64. 5.* Not either apart, but both together are required; not rejoyce without working righteousness, nor that without rejoycing in the work. The threatening, *Deut. 28.* is levelled against Israel, not barely because they served not God, but because they served him not with gladness in the abundance of his mercies. God delights to have his mercy seen in the cheerful countenance of his servants, while they are at his work; which may tell the spectators they serve a good Master.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Then they are real praises when they end in acts of mercy. Very observable is that place, *Heb. 13. 15. By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name.* Now mark the very next words, *But to do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* As if he had said, Think not you may thank God to save

save charges, be willing to both or neither. *Gods* goodness to us should make us merciful to others. 'I were strange indeed a soul should come out of his tender bosom with a hard uncharitable heart. Some children do not indeed take after their earthly parents, as *Cicero's* son, that had nothing of his father but his name; but *Gods* children partake all of their heavenly Fathers nature. *Philosophy* tells us, that there is no re-action from the earth to the heavens, they indeed shed their influences upon the lower world, which quicken and fructifie it, but the earth returns none back to make the Sun and Stars shine the better. *David* knew very well, that his goodness extended not unto God, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren, to the Saints which are on the earth, *Psal.* 16. 2. Indeed God hath left his poor Saints to receive his Rents we owe unto him for his mercies. An ingenuous guest, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet to shew his thankfulness will give something to his servants. At *Christ* his return, how doth he salute his Saints? *Matth.* 25. not, Come ye blessed, ye have kept such a thanksgiving day, and filled the air with your songs of praise; but, *When I was an hungry ye fed me, when naked ye clothed me.* Alms-deeds in *Saint Paul's* language are called fruit, *When I have performed this, and sealed to them this fruit, Rom.* 15. 28. implying, that all our profession without these good works are but leaves: this is the solid fruit of our faith, love to God, and thankfulness for his mercies. Neither must these acts of charity be restrained to the money in thy purse, or bread in thy cupboard, though these are included, there are poor souls as well as poor bodies, that need relief. Hath God plucked thee out of *Sodom*, out of *Satans* bondage? where are then thy bowels of compassion to those, who are yet chained to the Devils post? what means dost thou use to redeem these captives out of their worse than Turkish slavery? The argument God urgeth to *Israel* to use strangers kindly, is to remember they were once so, *Deut.* 23. 7. Hast thou, after long lying in the dungeon of spiritual darkness and troubles of conscience, had thy head lift up with the comforts of the Spirit, received into the presence of God as *Pharaoh's* Butler was to his Princes Court? how canst thou think thy self thankful, while thou forgettest others that lie in the same prison-house, under as sad fears and terrours as once thy self did? *Unto the upright there ariseth light out of darkness, he is gracious and full of compassion, Psal.* 112. 4. Surely this will hold, if in any, then in this case. In a word, that I may not be thought to make you hard to the outward man, while I stir up your charity to the inward. Hath God raised thee to an estate? (may be thy pilgrims staff with *Jacob's* is turned to two tropps) dost thou now shew the kindness of God to his poor members? as *David*, who enquired if there were none of the house of *Saul*. Oh how unlike are we to the Saints of primitive times! they would run to meet an object for their charity, and we run from them; they considered the poor what they wanted, how they might relieve them, yea, they devised liberal things: but we consider and contrive how we may save our purse best; they

were willing to part with all in case of extremity, while we grudge a little from our superfluity, laying that by pride on our backs, which should cover the poor; throw that to our hawks and hounds, which should refresh the bowels of the poor; yea, spend more in one drunken meeting, a misers feast, or a wrangling suit at Law, than we can be willing to give in a year to the necessitous members of *Christ*.

S E C T. III.

Fourthly, When it produceth a stronger confidence on God for the future. Who will say that man is thankful to his friend for a past kindness, that nourishes an ill opinion of him for the future, and dares not trust him when he needs him again? this was all that ungrateful *Israel* returned to God, for his miraculous broaching the Rock to quench their thirst, *Psal.* 78. 35. Behold, he smote the rock, can he give bread also? this indeed was their trade all along their wilderness-march. Wherefore God gives them their character, not by what they seemed to be while his mercies were piping-hot, and the feast stood before them, then they could say, *God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer*, but by their temper and carriage in straits; when the cloth was drawn, and the feast taken out of their sight, what opinion then had they of God? could they sanctifie his Name so far, as to trust him for their dinner to morrow, who had feasted them yesterday? Truly no, as soon as they feel their hunger return, like froward children they are crying, as if God meant to starve them. Wherefore God spits on the face of their praises, and owns not their hypocritical acknowledgements, but sets their ingratitude upon record; *They forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel.* Oh how sad is this! that after God hath entertained a soul many a time at his table with choice mercies and deliverances, these should be so ill husbanded, that not a bit of them all should be left to give faith a meal, thereby to keep the heart from fainting, when God comes not so fast to deliver as we desire? He is the most thankful man that ponders up the mercies of God in his memory, and can feed his faith with the thoughts of what God hath done for him, so as to walk in the strength thereof in present straits. When *Job* was on the dung-hill, he forgot not Gods old kindnesses, but durst trust him with a knife at his throat, *Though he kill me yet will I trust in him.* He that distrusts God after former experience, is like the foolish builder, *Matth.* 7. he rears his monument for past mercies on the sand, which the next tide of affliction washeth away.

Tenthly, and lastly, Thou must not only praise God thy self, while on the stage of this earth, but endeavour to transmit the memorial of his goodness to posterity. The *Psalmist* speaking of the mercies of God, *Psal.* 78. 4. faith, *We will not hide them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord.* Children are their parents heirs, they enter upon their estate; it were unnatural for a father before he dies, to bury up his treasure

in the Earth, where his children should not find or enjoy it; now the mercies of God are not the least part of his treasure, nor the least of his children's inheritance, being both helps to their faith, matter for their praise, and spurs to their obedience, *Psal. 44. Our fathers have told us what works thou hast done in their days, how thou didst drive out the heathen, &c. vers. 2, 3.* from this they ground their confidence, *vers. 4. Thou art my King, O God, command deliverances for Jacob;* and excite their thankfulness,

ver. 8. God we boast all the day-long, and praise thy Name for ever. Indeed as children are their parents heirs, so they become in justice liable to pay their parents debts; now the great debt which the Saint at death stands charged with, is that which he owes to God for his mercies, and therefore it is but reason he should tie his posterity to the payment thereof. Thus maist thou be praising God in Heaven and Earth at the same time.

CHAP. LX.

A reproof to the ungrateful world, where several kinds of ingratitude are discovered.

Use 1. **W**E shall wind up this Head with a double Application, of Reproof and Exhortation.

First, Of Reproof. How few alas can we find so ingenuous, as to pay this little quit-rent to the Great Lord of this worlds Mannor, for all the mercies they hold of him? Some are such brutes, that like swine their nose is nailed to the trough in which they feed; they have not the use of their understanding so far, as to lift up their eye to Heaven and say, There dwells that God that provides this for me, that God by whom I live, and from whom I have my livelihood. 'Twere well if we knew not in all our Towns where such brutes as these dwell. You would count it a sad spectacle, to behold a man in a Lethargy, with his senses and reason so blasted by his disease, that he knows not his nearest friends, and takes no notice of those that tend him, or bring his daily food to him. How many such senseless wretches are at this day lying upon his hands? Divine Providence ministers daily supplies to their necessities, but they take no notice of his care and goodness. Others there are that feloniously, yea, sacrilegiously, set the crown of praise on their own head, which is due alone to God. Thus *Nebuchadnezzar* writes his own name upon his Palace, and leaves God out of the story. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty? Dan. 4. 30.* Proud wretch! was not every stone he used in that pile cut out of Gods Quarrie? and for every skep of sand did he not come upon Gods ground? Thus the Atheistical Husbandman cons his plough and dung-cart more thanks than the God of Heaven, who crowns the year with his goodness. The proud souldier stands upon his sword, daring to take the honour of his victory to himself, and not ascribe it to the Lord of hosts, who at his pleasure gives and takes away the heart from the mighty. Yea some, rather than God shall have it, will give it to any other; thus *Pope Adrian* in his blasphemous inscription on the gates of a Colledge he built, abuseth God with Scripture-language, *Utrecht* planted me, *Lovain* watered me, and *Cesar* gave the increase; which made one under-write, *Nihil hic Deus fecit*; it seems God did nothing for this man. Not that I think it unlawful to acknowledge our be-

nefactors, as instruments in Gods hand for our good; but to blot out the name of God our chief founder to write the name of an underling creature, is a high piece of wickedness and ingratitude. I like that form which a good man used to his friend for a kindness, *I bless God for you, I thank God and you.* He that will exact more requires what we owe him not. In a word, Some, the worst of the three, instead of returning thanks to God for his mercies, abuse them to his dishonour; 'tis not more sad than true, that the goodness of God with many serves but to feed and nourish their lusts; they eat and drink at Gods cost, and then rise up to play the Rebels against God, no weapons will serve them to use but the mercies he hath given them. 'Tis too bad if the tenant pays not his easie rent, but to make strip and waste of the trees on his Land-lords ground, this is more intolerable; yet such outrages are daily practised in the wicked world with the mercies of God. *Michael Balbus* is infamous for his horrid ingratitude, who the same night that the *Emperour* had pardoned and released him, barbarously slew his Saviour: And do not many, whom God lets out of the prison of affliction, lift up their traitorous knife at God, wounding his Name with their oaths, drunkenness, and profaneness, as soon almost as the sentence of death is taken off, and their prison-door set open? To conclude, others that will needs pass for thankful, yet all the return is but windy praise; honour him with their lips and pour contempt upon him in their lives. What musick more harsh and displeasing, than to hear a Harper sing to one tune with his voice, and play another with his hand? Oh it grates in Gods ears when *Jacobs* voice is attended with *Esaus* rough hands. Truly when I consider, how the goodness of God is abused and perverted by the greatest part of mankind, I cannot but be of his mind that said, *Maximum miraculum, est Dei patientia & munificentia*; The greatest miracle in the world, is Gods patience and bounty to an ungrateful world. If a Prince hath an enemy got into one of his Towns, he doth not send them in provision, but lays close siege to the place, and doth what he can to starve them. But the great God, that could wink all his enemies into destruction bears with them, and is at daily cost to maintain them. Well may he command us to bless them that curse

us, who himself does good to the evil and unthankful. O what would not God do for his creature if thankful, that thus heaps the coals of his mercies upon the heads of his enemies? But think not, sinners, that you shall scape thus; Gods mill goes slow, but it grinds small; the more admirable his patience and bounty now is, the more dreadful and unsupportable will that fury be which ariseth out of his abused goodness. Nothing blunter than Iron, yet when sharpened, it hath an edge that will cut mortally. Nothing smoother than the Sea, yet when stirr'd into a tempest, nothing rageth more. Nothing so sweet as the patience and goodness of a God, and nothing so terrible as his wrath when it takes fire. Be therefore in the fear of God stirred up to bethink your selves what you mean to do. 'Tis the trick they say of distracted people, to spight their dearest friends and nearest relations most, these above all they seek to mischieve; but what folly and madness is it in thee to fly at the face of God with thy sins, that hath done more for thee than all thy friends, and can do more against thee than all thy enemies thou hast in the world? But the more to move thee,

First, consider, That God keeps an exact account of all his mercies thou receivest. You cannot steal Gods custom. He that could tell the Prophet where his servant *Gehazi* had been, and what he had received of *Naaman*, will one day tell thee to a farthing every talent thou hast received of him. God hath, as a bag for thy sins, so a book for his mercies; and what he books he means to reckon for.

Secondly, consider, How severely he hath dealt with those, that never had so much mercy from him as thy self. If *Heathens* are speechless in judgement, when God reckons with them for their mercies, O how confounded wilt thou be that goest from Go-

spel dispensations to hold up thy hand at the Bar before the Judge of all the world? *Rom. 1. 21. They are without excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.* If the Heathen that was not thankful for his penny, cannot lift up his hand in the day of the Lord, where wilt thou appear, that hast so many hundred Talents in thy hand to answer for?

Quest. But may be, poor wretch, thou maist now ask, What thou shouldst do to give God the praise of his mercies?

Ans. In a word, Thou hast but one way to pay God this his tribute, and it is a strange one, even by running deeper into his debt, than by all the mercies that yet thou hast received of him. Hear therefore poor sinner what I mean, That God, who hath given thee life and being, that hath exercised unspeakable patience towards thee, been at a vast expence in his daily providence upon thee, to preserve, feed, cloath and maintain thee, all which have been most wretchedly abused by thee, and for it thy life become forfeited to his justice, doth yet offer a greater mercy than all these, even the Lord Jesus, whom if thou wilt, with shame and sorrow for thy past sins, but, come unto, and accept to be thy Lord and Saviour, then wilt thou be in a posture, and not till then, to give God the praise of his other mercies; he that rejects this, that is the greatest of all mercies, can never be thankful for any. It is Christ who alone can give thee a spirit of thankfulness; not a Christless person is the world but is an unthankful person, *evil and unthankful* are inseparable. O what a blessed Gospel is this, that teacheth us here to pay debts by running deeper into the score? to be thankful for less mercies, by accepting that which is infinitely greater.

CHAP. LXI.

An Exhortation to Thankfulness, prest on the Saints from several Arguments.

Use 2. **S**Econdly, For Exhortation to the Saints, not to call you to this duty, which if you answer your name is undoubtedly your practice: but to quicken you in it, and make you more in love with it.

First, Consider, 'Tis a duty that becomes you well; *Psal. 33. Praise is comely for the righteous*; this garment of praise fits so well on none as on your back, you should not think your selves drest in a morning till you have it on. An unthankful Saint carries a contradiction with it. Evil and unthankful are the twins that live and die together; as any ceaseth to be evil, he begins to be thankful.

Secondly, 'Tis that which God both expects, and promiseth himself at your hands, he made you for this end. When the Vote past in heaven for your being, yea, happy being in Christ, it was upon this account, that you should be a name and a praise to him on earth in time, and in heaven to eternity. Should God mis of this, he would fail of one main part of his design. What prompts him to bestow every mercy, but to afford you matter to compose a song for his praise; *They are a people that will not lie, so he became their Saviour, Isa. 63.* he looks for fair dealing you see at your hands. Whom may a father trust with his reputation, if not a child? where can a Prince expect honour, if not among his Courtiers and Favourites? Your state is such, as the least mercy you have is more than all the world can shew besides. Thou, Christian, and thy few brethren, divide heaven and earth among you, what hath God that he with-holds from you? Sun, Moon, and Stars are set up to give you light, Sea and Land have their treasure and store for your use; others do but ravish them, you are the rightful heirs to them; they groan that any other should be served by them. The *Angels* bad and good minister unto you; the evil, against their will, are forced, like scullions, when they tempt you, to scour and brighten your graces, and make way for your greater comforts; like *Haman*, they hold your stirrup, while you mount up higher in favour with God. The good *Angels* are servants to your heavenly Father, and disdain not to carry you, as the nurse her Masters child, in her arms. Your God with-holds not himself from you, he is your Portion, Father, Husband, Friend, and what not? The same heaven you shall have to dwell in with him, and the same table and fare; God is his own happiness, and admits you to enjoy himself. O what honour is this, for the subject to drink in his Princes cup! *Psal. 36. 8. Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.* And all this not the purchase of your sweat, much less blood; the feast is paid for by another hand, and you are welcom: only he expects your thanks to the founder of it, at whose cost you are enter-

tained. No sin-offering is imposed upon you under the Gospel, thank-offerings are all he looks for.

Thirdly, God hath a book of remembrance for your services, he takes kind notice of the little good that is in you, and done by you, not the least office of love to his Name and house is over-look'd, though mingled with much evil; he commends the one, pardons and pities you for the other. *There is some good found in him toward the Lord God of Israel, 'twas said of Jeroboam's son, 1 King. 14. 13.* What an honourable testimony doth God give of *Asa*, *2 Chron. 15. 17. that his heart was perfect all his days*, though we find many wry steps he took. The little strength that *Philadelphia* had must not be forgot. What a favourable apology doth Christ make for *Joshua*, accused by Satan for his filthy garments? *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* and for his drowsie Disciples, *The flesh is weak, but spirit is willing?* now shall God take notice of the little good in his Saints, apologize for their infirmities, commend and reward their weak-services, yea, eternize their memory with honour, *Psal. 112. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance;* and doth not he deserve to be exalted for his infinite perfections? praised and loved who is all good, ever good, and doing good to them? Shall he be tender of thy name, and thou be regardless of his honour, so as to entomb his precious mercies in the Sepulchre of unthankfulness?

Fourthly, Consider what an ornament a thankful frame of heart is to Religion; This commends God to the unbelieving world, who know little more of him than your lives preach to them; they read Religion in that character you print it, and make their report of God and his ways, as they see you behave your selves in the world; if you walk disconsolately, or grumble at divine providence, how can they believe the ways of God are so pleasant as they are told? We listen what the servant saith of his master, if he commends him, and goes cheerfully through his work, this gains him credit among his neighbours. It was a convincing testimony *Daniel* gave to the goodness of God, when he would praise him thrice a day with the hazard of his life. To see a poor Christian thankful for his little pittance, yea, in the midst of his afflictions, as if he had Crowns and Kingdoms at his dispose, an ordinary understanding would reason thus, Surely this man finds some sweetness in his God that we see not, and is better paid for his service than we know of. The joyful praises of dying Saints in the midst of fiery flames, have made their spectators go home in love, not only with Religion, but with Martyrdom.

Fifthly, Consider the honour that is put upon you in this duty. To attend on a Prince, though

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bare.

V bare headed, and on the knee, is counted more honour for a Nobleman, than to live in the country, and have the service of his fellow-subjects. Though we serve God all the day long, yet in acts of Worship we have the honour immediately to attend on him, and minister to him: Oh blessed are they who may thus stand about him! Praise is the highest act of worship, and therefore to be continued in Heavens blissful state; where as other graces shall be melted into love and joy, so other duties of worship, as hearing, praying, &c. into praise and thanksgiving. The Priesthood was a great honour under the Law, he chose *Aaron* and his *Tribe* from among their brethren to serve at his Altar; he would take that gift from their hand which he would not at a Kings; but in this Gospel-state every believer hath a more honourable Priesthood, because he brings better sacrifices, the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; and while thou art honouring thy God, thou honourest thy self: The whole body shines with the beams of that Crown which is put on the head.

Sixthly, Consider, That thy praises will render

thy prayers more grateful and successful. 'Twas thought a good Omen for *Alexander's* future victories, that he was liberal to the gods in his sacrifices, throwing Frankincense by handfuls into the fire, He is a niggard to himself that is so to his God. *Remittatur in suum principium caeleste profuvium, quo uberius terra refundatur, Bern. Serm. 42. in Cantic.* Let the River of Gods mercies be return'd to pay its tribute to God their source and fountain, that they may refund more abundantly to us again. You shall observe the Saints in their greatest straits, when they have most to beg, deliver their prayers praise-wile. *Jehoshaphat* sends his Priests praising God into the field, and God fights for him. *David* in the Cave, *My heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.* *Daniel*, when a trap was laid for his life, *praiseth God thrice a day.* Christ himself, when he would raise *Lazarus*, lifts up his eyes and blesteth God, *I thank thee, O Father, &c.* When he was to suffer, sings an hymn. A thankful heart cannot easily meet with a denial; *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, Psal. 149. 6.*

VERSE

VERSE 18.

In the Spirit.

WE are come to the third Branch in the *Apostles Directory for Prayer*, the principle or Spring from whence they are to flow, *the Spirit, Praying in the Spirit.*

C H A P. I.

what it is to pray in the Spirit shewn.

Quest. BUT what is it to pray in the Spirit?

Ans. Interpreters generally comprehend in this phrase, both the spirit of the person praying, and the Spirit of God, by which our spirits are fitted for, and acted in prayer. *Est oratio in spiritu, nempe & nostro quo oramus, & Spiritu sancto per quem oramus*; so *Zanch. in loc.* That is a prayer in the spirit, which by the help of the holy Spirit is performed with our soul and spirit. These two indeed go ever together, we cannot act our spirit without the Holy Spirit; alas, that is like a lump of clay in our bosoms till he quickens it; and we cannot but pray with our heart and spirit, when the holy Spirit moves upon it. The Spirit's breath is vital. The holy Ghost doth not breathe in us, as one through a Trunk or Trumpet, which is a meer passive Instrument; but stirs up our hearts, and actuates our affections in the Duty. Prayer is called, *A pouring out of the Soul to God*; the soul is the Well, from which the water of prayer is poured; but the Spirit is the Spring that feeds this Well, and the Hand that helps to pour it forth; the Well would have no water without the Spring, neither could it deliver it self of it without one to draw it. Thus the Spirit of God must fill the heart with praying Affections, and enable them also to pour themselves forth.

From the Words thus sent, we shall a while dwell upon these two Propositions.

Obs. 1. He who will pray acceptably, must pray in his heart and spirit.

Obs. 2. He that would pray in his own spirit, must pray in the Spirit of God.

Obs. 1. To begin with the first. Praying in the spirit is opposed to lip-labour, *They draw near to me with their lips, but their heart is removed far from me*, like an Adulteress, whose heart and spirit is as far from her Husband, as where her Paramour is. 'Tis no prayer, in which the heart of the person bears no part. *Parisensis* glossing upon that place of *Hos.* 14. 2. *So will we render the calves of our lips*, compares the duty of Prayer to the Calves in the Legal Sacrifices; The composure of the words (saith he) in Prayer is as the Skin or Hide of the Beast, the voice as the Hair, the understanding as the flesh, the desires and affections of the heart, Fat of the Inwards; this, and this alone, makes it a prayer in Gods account. *My spirit pray-*

eth (saith the Apostle) *1 Cor.* 14. 4. and in *vers.* 15. *I will pray with the spirit, and sing with the spirit.* So *Rom.* 1. 9. *God whom I serve in the spirit.* The melodious sound which comes from a Musical Instrument (such as a Viol or Lute) is formed within the belly of the Instrument, and the deeper the belly of the Instrument, the sweeter is its Musick; the same strings on a flat Board, touched by the same hand would make no musick. The melodiousness of Prayer comes from within the man, *We are the Circumcision which worship God in the spirit*; and the deeper the groans are that come from thence, still the sweeter the melody. There may be outward worship, and inward Atheism, as *Melancthon* said, *Vos Itali adoratis Deum in pane, quem non creditis in celo esse.* There may be much pomp in the outward Ceremony of the performance, when the person neither loves nor believes that God whom he courts with an external Devotion. The blemishes which made the Sacrifices in the Law rejected, were not only in the outward limbs of the Beast, the sick as well as the lame Beast was refused, *Mal.* 1. 8. We read of loud praises, when never a word was heard spoken. But God owns none for a Prayer that hath the vehemency of the Voice, but not inspirited with the affection of the heart. Separate the spirit from the body, and the man is dead; the heart from the lip, and there is a dissolution of Prayer. Now in handling of this I must first shew, What it is to pray in our spirit, and then, Why we are thus to pray.

For the first, We pray in our spirit when these three are found in the duty: *First*, When we pray with knowledge. *Secondly*, When we pray in fervency. *Thirdly*, When we pray in sincerity. These three exercise the three powers of the soul and spirit: By knowledge, the understanding is set on work; by fervency, the affections; and by sincerity, the will; all these are required in conjunction to praying in the spirit. There may be knowledge without fervency, and this (like the light of the Moon) is cold, and quickens not; there may be heat without knowledge, and this is like Metal in a blind Horse; there may be knowledge and fervency, and this is like a Chariot with swift Horses, and a skilful Driver in the Box, but being dishonest, carries it the wrong way. Neither of these, nor both these together avail, because sincerity

is wanting to touch these affections, and make them stand to the right point, which is the glory of God.

He will have little thanks for his zeal that is fervent in spirit, but serving himself with it, not the Lord.

CHAP. II.

Sweweth, To pray in the spirit is required that we pray with understanding; also why this is required, and what understanding is required.

First, To pray acceptably is required we pray with understanding: A blind Sacrifice was rejected in the Law, *Mal. 1. 8.* much more are blind Devotions under the Gospel. As knowledge aggravates a sin, so ignorance takes from the excellency of an action that is good, *I bear them witness (saith Paul) they have a zeal, but not according to knowledge.* The want of an eye disfigures the fairest face, the want of knowledge the devoutest Prayer. *Ye worship ye know not what, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews, John 4. 22.* Where we see, what a fundamental defect the want of knowledge is in acts of worship, such as brings damnation with it. But why is knowledge so requisite to acceptable praying?

SECT. I.

First, Because without this, 'tis not a reasonable service, for we know not what we do. God calls for λογικὴ λατρεία, *Rom. 12. 1.* which some oppose to the legal sacrifices; they offered up Beasts to God, in the Gospel we are to offer our selves. Now the soul and spirit of a man is the man. Why did not God lay a law on Beasts to worship him, but because they have not a rational soul to understand and reflect upon their own actions? and will God accept that service and worship from man, wherein he doth not exercise that faculty that distinguisheth him from a Beast? *'Shew your selves men, saith the Prophet to those Idolaters, Isa. 46. 8.* And truly he that worships the true God ignorantly, is brutish in his knowledge, as well as he that prays to a false God.

Secondly, Because the understanding is τὸ νουνόμοιον, the leading faculty of the soul, and so the key of the work, the inward worship of the heart is the chief; now the other powers of the soul are disabled if they want this their guide which holds the Candle to them. As for those violent passions of seeming zeal, sorrow and joy, which sometimes appear in ignorant worshippers, and their blind Devotions, they are spurious. Christ's sheep, like *Jacobs*, conceive by the eye. First, the Saints eye is enlightned to see the Majesty and glorious holiness of God, and then it reveres, and mourns before him in the sense of his own vileness. *Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes, Job 42.* Again, by an eye of Faith he beholds the goodness and love of God

to poor sinners in Christ, and in particular to him, and this eye affects his heart to love and rely on him, which it is impossible the ignorant soul should do.

SECT. II.

Quest. But you will say, What is necessary for the praying soul to know?

Answ. First, That he to whom he directs his prayer is the true God. Religious Worship is an incommunicable Flower in the Crown of the Deity, and that both inward and outward. We are religiously to worship him only, who, by reason of his infinite perfections, deserves our supream Love, Honour and Trust. He must have the Crown, that owes the Kingdom; the Kingdom and Power is Gods, therefore the Glory of religious Worship belongs to him alone, *Math. 6. 13.* Angels are the highest order of Creatures, but we are forbid to worship any of the host of Heaven, *Deut. 17. 3.* *who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? for to thee it doth appertain.* Where fear is put for religious worship, as appears by the circumstance of the place. The want of this knowledge fill'd the Heathen world with Idolatry, for where they found any virtue or excellency in the Creature, presently they adored and worshipped it; like some ignorant Rustick, who coming to Court, thinks every one he sees in brave cloaths to be the King.

Secondly, There is required a knowledge of this true God, what his nature is; *He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6.* 'Tis confessed, a perfect knowledge of the divine perfection is incomprehensible by a finite being. He answered right who said, when asked, *Quid est Deus? Si scirem, essem ipse Deus;* none indeed knows God thus but God himself; yet a Scripture-knowledge of him is necessary to the right performance of this duty. The want of understanding his Omniscience and infinite mercy, is the cause of vain babbling; and a conceit to prevail by long prayers, which our Saviour charges upon the Heathen, and prevents in his Disciples by acquainting them with these Attributes, *Math. 6. 7, 8.* They came rather *narrare* than *rogare*, to inform God, than to beg. The ignorance of this high and glorious Majesty is the cause why many are so rude and slovenly in their gesture, so sawcy and irreverently familiar with

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God in their expressions. We are bid to be sober watching unto prayer. Truly there is an insobriety in our very language, when we do not cloath the desires of our hearts with such humble expressions, as may signifie the awe and dread of his sacred Majesty in our hearts. In a word, the reason why men dare come reaking out of the adulterous embraces of their lusts, and stretch forth their unwashed hands to heaven in prayer; whence is it, but because they know not God to be of such infinite purity, as will have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity? *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself, Psal. 50. 21.*

Thirdly, We must understand the matter of our prayers, what we beg, what we deprecate, without which we cannot in faith say *Amen* to our own prayers, but may soon ask that which neither becomes us to desire, nor is honourable for God to give. This Christ rebuked, when she in the Gospel put up her ambitious request for her Children, to be set one at the right hand, and the other at the left hand of Christ in his Kingdom. God never gave us leave thus to indite our own prayers, by the dictate of our private spirit, but hath bound us up to ask only what he hath promised to give.

Fourthly, A knowledge of the manner how we are to pray, as in whose name, and what qualifications are required in the prayer and person praying. We find *Paul* begging prayers, *that ye strive together with me in your prayers*; in another place he tells us of a lawful striving, *2 Tim. 2. 5.* There is a Law of prayer, which must be observed, or we come at our own adventure; even in false worship they go by some rule in their addresses to their gods; therefore those smattering *Samaritans*, *2 Kings 17. 26.* when a plague was on them, concluded the reason to be, because they knew not the manner of the God of the Land. The true God will be served in due order, or else expect a breach. A word or two for application of this Branch.

SECT. III.

Use 1. First, How few then pray in the Spirit? were this the only Character to try many by, would they not be cast over the Bar for meer bablers? as first, those in the *Popish Church*, where most know not a word what they say in prayer. If it be such a weakness to subscribe a Petition to a *King*, or to a *Parliament*, which we never read nor understood; what shall we then think of such brutish prayers as these, sent to heaven, and endorsed with an *Ignoramus* on the back of them? Yea, amongst our selves, many, who though they pray in their Mother-Language, yet are as ignorant as to the matter of their prayers, how else could they patter o-

ver the Creed and Commandments with their blind devotion instead of prayers. Are there more deplored ruine of mankind to be found among the *Indians* than such? Yea, when they joyn with their Minister in prayer, neither know that God to whom the prayer is directed; nor the Mediator under the favour of whose Name it is presented. Before *Nebuchadnezzar* could bless God, he had the understanding of a man given him, which these yet want. Do you not think such ignorant wretches as these might be easily perswaded to kneel before an Image gaudily dressed up, or to put their Letter into some Angel or Saint's hand for dispatch, being made to believe, that it will find a kinder welcome by the mediation of such Favourites? Oh what a darkness is there even at this day upon the face of our waters! on which had but the *Popes* instruments opportunity to sit brooding a while, they might soon bring their desired work to a perfection among the multitude of ignorant souls that are amidst us! We see there is need not only to stir up our people to pray, but to help them to knowledge how they may pray, or else we send them before they have learned their errand; as if we should call a Child to read before he hath learned his Letters.

Use 2. Secondly, It speaks to all that are at any time the mouth to God for others in prayer, so to pray, that those who joyn with them may clearly understand what they put up to God for them. Who is more to be blamed, he that prayeth in an unknown tongue, or he that with such uncouth phrases, and high-flown expressions, as are not understood by half the company? Suppose thine own spirit prays (as the *Apostle* saith) yet thy understanding is unfruitful unto them; they alas are at a loss, and stand gazing, as the *Disciples* did, when the cloud parted Christ from them. Either come down from thy high trowing expressions, or help them up to thee. They may say of thee as those of *Moses*, *We know not what is become of the man.* No wonder, if while they cannot keep sight of the matter in hand, that their thoughts rove and dance about some object of their own framing. Dost thou pray to be admired for thy rolling tongue, height of gifts, or the like? perhaps thou maist have this thy reward of some ignorant ones, and others that would as fain commend themselves upon the same account; but consider what a low and base end thou propoundest in so high a service, unworthy of a Christians thought. What? no net to fish with for thy credit and applause but a sacred Ordinance? The whip which Christ made in the Gospel belongs to thy back. Our blessed Saviour that was all on fire with zeal to see his house of prayer made a house of merchandise, O how doth his soul loath the baseness of thy mercenary spirit, who dost the same, though in another dress.

CHAP. III.

Shews, to praying in the Spirit is required fervency, and two reasons why this is required.

Fervency-

THe second thing required in praying with our spirit is fervency. The soul keeps the body warm while it is in it, so much as there is of our soul and spirit in a duty, so much heat and fervency. If the prayer be cold, we may certainly conclude the heart is idle, and bears no part in the duty. Our spirit is an active creature, what it doth is with a force, whether bad or good. Hence in Scripture, to set the heart and soul upon a thing imports vehemency and fervour; thus the poor labouring man is said to set his heart on his wages, *Deut. 24. 15.* the hopes of what he shall have at night makes him sweat at his work in the day. *Nebuchadnezzar set his heart on Daniel to deliver him;* and it follows, *He laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him, Dan. 6.* When the spirit of a man is set about a work, he will do it to purpose; *If thou shalt seek the Lord with all thy heart and all thy soul, Deut. 4. 29.* that is, fervently. This consists not in a violent agitation of the bodily spirits, a man may put his body into a sweat in duty, and the prayer be cold; that is the fervent prayer that flows from a warm heart, and enkindled affections; like an exhalation which is first set on fire in the cloud, and then breaks forth into Thunder; *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire kindled, then spake I with my tongue. Lord make me to know mine end, Psal. 39. 3, 4.* Now as zeal is not one single affection, but the edge and vehemency of them all; so fervency in prayer is when all the affections act strongly and suitably to the several parts of prayer. In confession, when the soul melts into holy shame and sorrow for the sins he spreads before the Lord, so that he feels a holy smart and pain within, and doth not act a tragical part with a comical heart; for, as *Chrysostom* saith, *To Paint tears is worse than to paint the face.* Here is true fervency, *I mourn in my complaint and make a noise, Psal. 55. 2.* There may be fire in the pan, when none in the piece; a loud wind, but no rain with it. *David* made a noise with his voice, and mourned in his spirit. So in Petition, when the heart is drawn out with vehement desires of the grace it prays for, not some lazy wouldings or wishings, or weak velleities, but passionate breathings and breakings of heart, sometimes set out by the violence of thirst, which is thought more tormenting than that of hunger. As the hunted Hart panteth after the cool waters, so did *David's* soul after God, *Psal. 42.* Sometimes by the strainings of a wrestler, so *Jacob* is said to wrestle with the Angel; and of those that run in a race, *Act. 26. 7.* *Instantly serving God day and night; in exercise,* they stretched out themselves. *My soul breaketh for longing, Psal. 119. 20.* as one that with straining breaks a vein.

Quest. But why must we thus pray in the spirit fervently?

Ans. First, from the command, *Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy strength, with all thy might, and his word shall be in thy heart.* Which imports the affectionate performance of every command and duty. Sever the outward from the inward part of Gods worship, and he owns it not; *Who hath required this at your hands?* said God to them that were enough prodigal of their Sacrifices, *Isa. 1. 12.* as if he had said, Did I ever command you to give a beasts heart in sacrifice, and keep back your own? Why dost thou pray at all? Wilt thou say, Because he commands it? then why not fervently, which the command intends chiefly? When you send for a Book, would you be pleased with him that brings only the cover? and will God accept the skin for the sacrifice? the external part of the duty is but as the Cup, thy Love, Faith, and Joy are the Wine he desires to taste of; without these, thou givest him but an empty Cup to drink in, now what is this but to mock him?

Secondly, To comport with the Name of God. The common description of prayer is calling on the Name of God. Now as in prayer we call upon the Name of God, so it must be with a worship suitable to his Name, or else we pollute it and incur his wrath; this is the chief meaning of the Third Commandment: In the first God provides, that none besides himself, the only true God, be worshipped; in the second, that he the true God be not served with will-worship, but his own institutions; and in the third, that he be not served vainly and slightly in his own Worship. There is no Attribute in God but calls for this fervency in his worship.

First, He is a great and glorious God, and as such, it becomes us to approach his presence with our affections in the best array. Are yawning prayers fit for a great Gods hearing? dardest thou speak to such a Majesty before thou art well awake, and hast such a sacrifice prepared as he will accept? *Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen.* See here, first, any thing less than the best we have, is a corrupt thing; he will accept a little if the best, but he abhors thou shouldst save the best for another. Again, He that offers not the best, the strength of his affections, is a deceiver, because he robs him of his due, and he is a great God. 'Tis fit the Princes table should be served with the best that the Market affords, and not the refuse. When *Jacob* intended a present to the Governor of the Land, he bids his children take of the best of the fruit of the land

land in their vessels. Lastly, The awful thoughts which God extorts from the very Heathen by his mighty works, do reproach as, who live in the bosom of the Church, and despise his Name by our heedless and heartless serving of him.

Secondly, He is the living God. Is a dead-hearted prayer a sacrifice suitable to a living God? how can that be accepted of him which never came from him? Lay not your dead prayers by his side, the lively Prayer is his, the dead thine own. What the Psalmist saith of persons, we may say of prayers, *The living, the living they shall praise him.* The glorious Angels, who for their zeal are called *Seraphims*, and a flame of fire, these he chuseth to minister to him in Heaven, and the Saints below (who though they sojourn on earth, yet have their extraction from Heaven, and so have spirits raised and refined from the dulness of their earthly constitution) these he sets apart for himself as Priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto him. The quicker any one is himself, the more offensive is a dull leaden-heel'd messenger, or slow handed-workman to him. How then can God, who is all life, brook thy lazy listless devotions? When he commanded the neck of an Ass to be broke, and not offered up unto him, was it because he was angry with the beast? no sure, it was his own workman-

ship, no other than himself made it; but to teach us, how unpleasing a dull heart is to him in his service.

Thirdly, he is a loving God, and love will be paid in no coin but its own. Give God love for love, or he accounts you give him nothing. *If ye love me, keep my commandments, John 14.* And, *If a man would give the substance of his house for love, it would be consumed; Gal. 8. 7.* So, if a man think so commute with God, and give him any thing in prayer instead of his love and fervent affection, it will be contemned. Let the prayer be never so pithy, the posture of the body never so devout, the voice never so loud, if the affections of the heart be not drawn out after God in the duty, he disdains, and rejects it, because it doth not correspond with the dear affections which God expresseth to us: He draws out his heart with his purse, and gives his very soul and self with all his gifts to his people, therefore he expects our hearts should come with all our services to him. It is no wonder to see the servant, whose Master is hard and cruel, have no heart to, or metal in his work; but love in the Master useth to put life into the servant; and therefore God, who is incomparably the best Master, disdains to be served as none but the worst among men use to be.

CHAP. IV.

Contains a third reason of the Point, also shews how few pray in the Spirit.

Thirdly, The promise is only to fervent prayer. A still-born child is no heir, neither is a prayer that wants life heir to any promise. Fervency is to prayer what fire was to the spices in the Censer, without this it cannot ascend as incense before God. Some have attempted a shorter cut to the Indies by the North, but were ever frozen up in their way; and so will all sluggish prayers be served. It were an easie voyage indeed to Heaven, if such prayers might find the way thither; but never could they shew any of that good Lands gold who prayed thus, though he were a Saint. The righteous man indeed is declared heir, as to all other promises, so to this of having his prayer heard; but he hath not *aptitudinem inrandi*, he is not in a fit posture, to enter into the possession of this promise, or claim present benefit from it, while his heart remains cold and formal in the duty. There is a qualification to the act of prayer as necessary, as of the person praying, *The fervent prayer of the righteous person availeth much.* When God intends a mercy for his people, he stirs up a spirit of prayer in them, *I never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain; that is, I never stirred them up to it, and helped them in it, and then let them lose their labour. Jer. 29. 12. Then shall ye go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your*

heart. Feeble desires, like weak pangs, go over, and bring not a mercy to the birth. As the full time grows nearer, so the spirit of prayer grows stronger. *Shall not he avenge his elect that cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily, Luke 18. 7.* None in the house perhaps will stir for a little knock at the door, they think he is some idle beggar, or one in no great haste; but if he raps thick and loud, then they go, yea, out of their beds; *Luke 11. 8. Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity.*

Use 1. First, This sadly shews, there is little true praying to be found among us, because few that pray fervently. Let us sort men into their several ranks, first, the ignorant, Do these pray fervently? Their hearts alas must needs be frozen up in the duty, they dwell too far from the Sun, to have any of this Divine heat in their devotions. Secondly, The prophane person that is debauched with his filthy lusts, his heat runs out another way. Can the heart which is inflamed with lusts be any other than cold in prayer? Hell-fire must be quenched before this from Heaven can be kindled. Thirdly, The soul under the power of roving thoughts, whose mind (like Satan) is walking to and fro the earth, while his eyes seem nailed to Heaven; Can he be fervent? can the affections be intended, and the

the mind inattentive? Fervency unites the Soul, and gathers in the thoughts to the work in hand; it will not suffer diversions, but answers all foreign thoughts, as *Nehemiah*, in another case, did them that would have call'd him off from building, *I am about a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease?* Neh. 6. 3. 'Tis said of *Elias*, he prayed earnestly, he prayed in praying, so the *Greek*; as in *Ezekiel's* vision, there was a wheel in a wheel, so a Prayer in his Prayer. Whereas the roving soul is prayer-less, his Lips pray, and his mind plays; his eye is up to heaven, as if that were his mark, but he shoots his thoughts down to the earth. Fourthly, He to whom the duty is tedious and wearisome, who doth not sigh and groan in the duty, but under it; who prays as a sick man works

in his Calling, finding no delight or joy in it. True fervency suffers no weariness, feels no pain. The Tradesman when hot at his work, and the Soldier in fight, the one feels not his weariness, nor the other his wounds. Affections are strong things, able to pull up a weak body. Therefore he that shrugs at a duty, and turns this way, and that way, as a sick man from one side of his bed to the other for ease, shews he hath little content in the duty, and therefore less zeal. These aches of the Spirit in Prayer (though he be a Saint) come of some cold that he hath gotten, and declare him to be under a great distemper. A man in health finds not more savour in his food, and refreshing from it, than the Christian doth in the offices of Religion, when his heart is in the right temper.

CHAP. V.

Some moving Arguments to enkindle our Zeal and Fervency in Prayer.

Use 2. **S**ECONDLY, for Exhortation. Dost thou pray? Pray fervently, or thou dost nothing. Cold prayer is no more prayer, than painted fire is fire. That prayer which warms not thine own heart, will it, thinkest thou, move Gods? thou drawest the tap, but the vessel is frozen. A man hath not the use of his hand clung up with cold, neither canst thou have the use of thy spirit in duty, till thy heart be chafed into some sense and feeling of what thou prayest for. Now to bring thy cold heart into some spiritual heat,

SECT. I.

First, Consider the excellency of Zeal and Fervency; if a Saint, thou hast a principle that inclines thee to approve of things that are excellent; and such is this. Life is the excellency of beings, yea, even in inanimate creatures, there is an Analogical life, and therein consists their excellency. The spirits of Wine commend it, what is it worth when dead and flat? In the Diamond, the sparkle gives the worth; in Fountain-water, that which makes it more excellent than other is its motion, called therefore *living water*; much more in beings that have true life, for this, the Flea or Fly are counted nobler creatures, the Sun. The higher kind of life that beings have, their nature is thereby the more advanced, beasts above plants, men above beasts, and Angels above men. Now as life gives the excellency to being, so vivacity and vigour in operating gives excellency to life. Indeed the nobler the life of the Creature is, the greater energy is in its actings, the apprehension of an Angel is quicker, and zeal stronger, than in a man. So that the more lively thou art in thy duty, and the more zeal thou expressest therein, the nearer thou comest to the nature of those glorious spirits, who for their zeal in the service of God are called a flame

of fire. I confess, to be calm and cool in inferior things, and in our own matters betwixt man and man, is better than zeal; so *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 17. 27. *A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit*, in the *Hebrew* 'tis a cool spirit, injuries do not put him into a flame, neither do any occurrences in the world heat him to any height of joy, grief, or anger: Who more temperate in these than *Moses*? But set this holy man to pray, he is fire and tow, all life and zeal. Indeed it is one excellency of this Fervency of spirit in prayer, that it allays all sinful passions. *David's* fervency in praying for his Child when alive, made him bear the tidings of his death so calmly and patiently: We hear not an angry word that *Hanna* replies to her scolding companion *Peninnah*, and why? but because she had found the Art of ceasing her troubled spirit in prayer; what need she contend with her adversary, who could by wrestling with God, persuade him to espouse her quarrel. And truly were there nothing else to commend fervency of spirit in prayer, this is enough, that like *David's* Harp, it can charm the evil spirit of our passions, which in their excess the Saint counts great sins, and I am sure finds them grievous troubles. When are you more placate and serene, than when with most life and fervour your souls can mount up in the flame of your sacrifices into the bosom of God? Possibly you may come like *Moses* down the Mount with greater heat, but it will be against sin, not for self; whereas a formal prayer like a Plaster, which hath good Ingredients in it, yet being laid cold upon the wound, hurts it rather than heals it.

SECT. II.

Secondly, God deserves the prime and strength of thy soul should be bestowed on him in thy prayers.

ers. *First*, He gave thee the powers of thy soul, and all thy affections. According to the mould, so is the statue that is cast in it; such thou art, as thou wert in the *Idea* of the Divine Mind. Now may not thy Maker call for that which was his gift? He that made the stone an inanimate being, and confined the narrow souls of brutes to act upon some low sensitive good, ennobleth thee with a rational appetite and spiritual affections. Now wilt thou not employ those divine powers in the worship of thy God, from whom thou hadst them? This were hard indeed, that God should be denyed what himself gave, and not suffered to taste of his own cost: *I came to my own* (saith Christ) *and they would not receive me*. Thus here, I came to my own creature, he had his life from me, and brings a dead heart unto me. Suppose a friend should give you notice, that he will ere long be at your house, and send you in before-hand a Vessel of rich Wine, would you when he comes, grudge to broach it for his entertainment, and put him off with that which is dead and flat? Expectest thou a better friend to be thy Guest than thy God? The Psalmist calls upon us to *serve the Lord with gladness*, and what is his enforcement? *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us*, Psal. 100. Who plants a Vineyard, and looks not to drink of the Wine? If God calls our Corn and Wine his, he therefore expects to be served with them; much more with our love and joy, for surely he allows us not to alienate the best of his gifts from him. When thou art therefore going to pray, call up thy affections, which haply are asleep on some creatures lap, as *Jonah* in the sides of the ship, *Awake, sleeper, and call upon thy God*. *Secondly*, He deserves thy affections, because he gives thee his; he is jealous of thee, because he is zealous for thee. Well may he complain of thy cold dreaming prayers, whose heart is on a flame of love to thee. High and admirable are the expressions with which he sets forth his dear love to his people, whatever he doth for them is with a zeal; *in protecting of them, as birds flying, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem*, that is, swiftly, as a Bird flies full speed to her Nest, when she perceives her young is in danger; *in avenging them of their enemies, the zeal of the Lord shall perform it*; *in hearing their prayers*, he doth it with delight; *in forgiving their sins*, he is ready to forgive, multiplies to pardon; when they ask one Talent he gives them two. *Jacob* desires a safe egress and regress, he

doth this, and more than he desired; for he brings him home with two bands; not the least mercy he gives, but he draws forth his soul and heart with it; even in his afflicting providences, where he seems to shew least love, there his heart overflows with it. *What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim? my bowels are turned within me*. *Thirdly*, He is a good paymaster for his peoples zeal, Heb. 11. 6. *He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. Never did fervent prayer find cold welcome with him. *Eliah* his prayer fetch'd fire from Heaven, because it carried fire to Heaven; the *Tribe of Levi* for their zeal were preferred to the Priesthood, and why? surely they who were so zealous in doing justice on their Brethren, would be no less zealous in making Atonement for them by their Sacrifices. Most men lose the fervency and strength of their desires by misplacing them, they are zealous for such things as cannot, and persons that oft will not pay them for their pains: O how hot is the covetous man in his chase after the worlds pelf! *he pants after the dust of the earth*, and that upon the heads of the poor; but what reward hath he for his labour? after all his getting, like the Dogs in pursuit of the Hare, he misleth his Game, and at last goes often poor and supperless to bed in his Grave; to be sure, *he dies a fool*, Jer. 17. 11. How many Court-Spaniels (that have fawned and flattered, yea, lickt up their Masters spittle, and all for some scraps of preferment) have befooled themselves, when at last they have seen their creeping sordid practices rewarded with the fatal stroke of the Headsman, or a lingering consumptive death in their Princes favour? which made that ambitious Cardinal say too late, if he had been as observant of his Heavenly Master as he had been of his earthly, he should not have been left so miserable at last. In a word, Do we not see the superstitious person knocking his breast, and cutting his own flesh, out of zeal to his wooden god, that hath neither ear to hear, nor hand to help him? Now doth not the living God, thy loving Father, deserve thy zeal more than their dead and dumb Idols do theirs? For shame let not us be cold in his Worship, when the Idolater sweats before his god of clouts; let not the Worldlings zeal, in pursuit of his earthly Mammon, leave thee lagging behind with a heedless heartless serving of thy God; neither fear the Worlds hooting at thee for thy zeal, they think thee a fool, but thou knowest them to be so.

CHAP. VI.

Something laid down by way of help, to raise our affections in Prayer.

Quest. **B**Ut how may we get this fervency of spirit in prayer?

Ans. 1. Thou who propoundest the question, art a Saint, or not? if not, there is another Question must precede this, How thou, that art at present in a state of spiritual death, maist have life? there must be life in the soul before there can be life in the duty. All the Rugs in the Upholsters shop will not fetch a dead man to warmth, nor any arguments, though taken from the most moving Topicks in the Scripture, will make thee pray fervently, while thy soul lyes in a dead state. Go first to Christ that thou maist have life, and having life, then there is hope to chafe thee into some heat.

But secondly, If thou beest a Saint, it yet calls for thy utmost care to get, and when thou hast got, to keep thy soul in a kindly heat. As the stone cannot of it self mount up into the air, so the bird (though it can do this, yet) cannot stay there long, without some labour and motion with its wings. The Saints have a spark of heavenly fire in their bosom, but this needs the bellows of their care and diligence to keep it alive. There is a rust that breeds from the Gold, a worm from the Wood, a moth from the Garment, that in time wastes them, and ashes from the coal that choaks the fire; yea, and in the Saint too, which will damp his zeal, if not cleared by daily watchfulness. Observe therefore what is thy chief impediment to fervency in prayer; and set thy self vigorously against it; if thou beest remiss in this precedaneous duty, thou wilt be much more remiss in prayer it self. He that knows of a slough in the way, and mends it not before he takes his journey, hath no cause to wonder when his Chariot is laid fast in it.

Now this is not the same in all, and therefore it is necessary that thou beest so much acquainted with thine own estate, as to know what is thy great clog in this duty. Certainly, were not the firmament of the Saints soul cooled with some malignant vapours, that arise from within his own breast, and weaken the force of divine grace in him, it would be Summer all the year long with him, his heart would be ever warm, and his affections lively in duty. Look therefore narrowly whence thy cooling comes; perhaps thy heart is too much let out upon the world in the day, and at night thy spirits are spent, when thou shouldest come before the Lord in Prayer. If thou wilt be hotter in duty, thou must be colder towards the world. A Horse that carrieth a pack all day, is unfit to go post at night; wood that hath the sap in it will not easily burn; neither will thy heart readily take fire in holy duties, who comest so sopt in the world to them; drain therefore thy heart of these eager affections to that, if thou meanest to have them

warm and lively in this. Now no better way for this, than to set thy soul under the frequent meditation of Christs love to thee, thy relation to him, with the great and glorious things thou expectest from him in another world; this or nothing will dry up thy love to this world, as your wood which is laid a sunning is made fit for the fire; whereas let your hearts continue soaking in the thoughts of an inordinate love to the world, and you will find when you come to pray, that thy heart will be in duty even as a foggy wet logg at the back of a fire, long in kindling and soon out again. Haply the deadness of thy heart in prayer, ariseth from want of a deep sense of thy wants, and the mercies thou desirest to have supplied. Couldst thou but pray feelingly, no doubt but thou wouldest pray fervently. The hungry man needs no help from art to learn him how to beg, his pinched bowels make him earnest and eloquent. Is it pardon of sin thou wouldest pray for? first, see what anguish of spirit they put thee to; do with thy soul as the Chirurgeon with his patiens wounds, who syringeth them with some sharp searching water, to try what sence he hath of them. Apply such considerations to thy soul as may make thee feel their smart, and be sensible of thy deplored estate by reason of them; then go and sleep at prayer if thou canst. We have *David* first affecting his heart, and expressing the dolor of his soul for his sin, *Psalm 38. Mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me*; now when his heart is sick with these thoughts, as one with strong Physick working in his stomach, he pours out his soul in prayer to God, *All my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee, verse 8.* Art thou to pray for others? first, pierce thy heart through with their sorrows, and by a spirit of sympathy bring thy self to feel their miseries, as if thou wert in their case; then will thy heart be warm in prayer for them, when it flows from a heart melted in compassion to them; thus we read Christ troubled himself for *Lazarus*, before he lifted up his eyes to Heaven for him, *Joh. 11. 33--38.* compared. Again, it may be thy want of zeal proceeds from a defect in thy faith, faith is the back of Steel to the Bow of Prayer, this sends the arrow with a force to Heaven; where faith is weak, the cry will not be strong. He that goes about a business with little hope to speed, will do it but faintly, he works, as we say, for a dead horse. 'Tis a true axiom, *Voluntas non fertur in impossibilia*, the less we hope, the less we endeavour. We read of strong cries that Christ put up in the dayes of his flesh, now mark what enforced his prayer, *unto him that was able to save him*; and not only so, but if you look into that prayer to which this refers, you shall find

he

he claspt about God as his God, *My God, My God*; his hold on God held up his spirit in prayer. So in the several precedents of praying Saints upon Scripture-record, you may see how the spirit of prayer ebb'd and flow'd, fell and rose as their faith was up and down. This made *David* press so hard upon God in the day of his distress, *I believed, therefore I spake, I was greatly afflicted*, Psal. 116. This made the woman of *Canaan* so invincibly importunate, let Christ frown and chide, deny and rebuke her, she yet makes her approaches nearer and nearer, gathering Arguments from his very denials, as if a Souldier should shoot his enemies Bullets back upon him again; and Christ tells us

what kept up her spirit undaunted, *Oh woman, great is thy faith! Lastly*, May be it proceeds from some distaste thou hast given to the holy Spirit; who alone can blow up thy affections, and then no wonder thou art cold in prayer, when he is gone that should keep thy heart warm at it. What is the body without the soul, but cold clay, dead earth? and what the soul without the spirit? truly no better. O invite him back to thy soul, or else thy praying-work is at an end; and if thou wouldest perswade him to return, observe what was the thing that distasted him, and remove it; that which makes this Dove forsake its Lockyers, will hinder his return if not taken away.

CHAP. VII.

The third thing required to pray with our spirit, viz. Sincerity; wherein it consists, and how necessary, shewn.

3. **T**HE third thing required to praying with our spirit, is Sincerity. There may be much fervour where there is little or no Sincerity; and this is strange fire, the heat of a distemper, not the kindly natural heat of the new creature, which both comes from God, and acts for God; whereas the other is from self, and ends in self. Indeed the fire which Self kindles, serves only to warm the mans own hands by it that makes it; *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass about your selves with sparks*, Isa. 50. The Prophet represents them as sitting down about the fire they had made. Self-acting and Self-aiming ever go together; therefore our Saviour with Spirit requires Truth, John 4. 24. *He seeketh such to worship him as will worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Quest. But wherein consists this sincere fervency?

Ans. Zeal intends the affections, sincerity directs their end, and consists in their purity and incorruption: the blood is oft hot when none of the purest, and affections strong when the heart insincere; therefore the Apostle exhorts us, *that we love one another out of a pure mind fervently*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. and speaks in another place of *sorrowing after a godly sort*; that is, sincerely. Now the sincerity of the heart in prayer then appears, when a person is real in his prayers, and that from pure principles to pure ends.

First, When he is real in what he presents to God in prayer, the Index of his tongue without, and the Clock-work of his heart within go together; he doth not declaim against a sin with his lips, which he favours with his heart; he doth not make a loud cry for that Grace, which he would be sorry to have granted him. This is the true badge of a hypocrite, who oft would be loth God should take him at his word; a dismal day it will be to such, when God shall bring in their own Conscience to witness against them, that their hearts never signed

and sealed the request which they made. There is a State policy used sometimes by Princes, to send Ambassadors, and set Treaties on foot, when nothing less than Peace is intended; such a deceit is to be found in the false heart of man, to blind and cover secret purposes of War and Rebellion against God, with fair overtures in prayer to him for peace.

Secondly, When the person is not only real in what he desires, but this from a pure principle to a pure end. I doubt not but a hypocrite in confession may have a real trouble upon his spirit for his sins, and cordially; yea, passionately, desire his pardoning mercy, but not from a pure principle, a hatred of sin, but an abhorrency of wrath he sees hanging to him for it; not for a pure end, that the glory of Gods mercy may be magnified in and by him, but that himself may not be tormented by Gods just wrath. He may desire the Graces of his Spirit, but not out of any love to them, but only as an expedient, without which he knows to Hell he must go; as a sick man in exquisite torture (suppose of the Stone or some other acute disease) calls for some Potion he loaths, because he knows he cannot have ease except he drinks it; whereas the sincere soul desires Grace, not only as Physick but Food, he craves it not only as necessary, but as sweet to his Palate; the intrinsecal bonity and excellency of holiness inflames him with such a love to it, that as one taken with the beauty of a Virgin, faith, he will marry her, though he hath nothing with her but the clothes to her back; so the sincere heart would have holiness, though it brought no other advantages with it, than what is found in its own lovely nature. So much to shew what sincerity in prayer is.

Now he that would pray acceptably, must pray thus in his Spirit, that is, with the sincerity of his Spirit; *The prayer of the upright is his delight*. *Nadab and Abihu* brought fire, and had fire, a strange

+ the hypocrite

fire to destroy them for the strange fire they offered, *Lev. 10. 1.* and such is all fervency and zeal, that is not taken from the Altar of a sincere heart. The fervent prayer *ἡνὶ ἰσχυρῶς*, it can do much, but it must be of a righteous man, and such the sincere man only is. And no wonder that God stands so much upon sincerity in prayer, seeing the lip of truth is so prized even among men; nature hath taught men to commend their words to others, by laying their hands on their breasts, as an assurance, that what they say or promise is true and cordial; which the penitent Publican it is like aimed at, *Luke 18. 13.* he smote upon his breast, saying, *God, be merciful to me a sinner*, thereby declaring whence his sorrowful confession came. That light which told the Heathens that God must be worshipped, informed them also, this worship must come from the inward recesses of the heart: *In sancto quid facit aurum—quin damnum id superis, &c.* What care the Gods for Gold, let us offer that which is more worth than all treasure, *sanctos recessus animi*, the heart and inward affections of it. It is a strange custom, *Benzo* in his *historia novi orbis*, relates of the Natives there, *Indi occidentales dum sacra faciunt, dimisso in guttur bacillo, vomitum ciet, ut Idolo ostendant, nihil se in pectore mali occultum gerere*: When worshipping their Gods, they used by

putting a little stick down their throat to provoke them to vomit, thereby shewing their Idol, that they carried no secret evil within them. I should not have named this barbarous custom, but to shew how deeply this notion is engraven in the natural conscience, That we must be sincere in the worship of God.

Use. Let it put us upon the tryal, whether we thus pray in the Spirit, whether you can find sincerity stamp on your fervency; if the prayer be not fervent it cannot be sincere, but it may have a fervour without this. This is a very fine sieve, approve thy self here, and thou maist without presumption write thy self a Saint; but how fervent soever thou art without sincerity, it matters not; nay, zeal without uprightness is worse than key-cold; none will go to Hell with more shame than the false-hearted zealot, who mounts up towards Heaven in the fiery Chariot, a seeming zeal, but at last is found a Devil in *Samuel's* mantle, and so is thrown down like lightning from Heaven, whether he would have been thought by his neighbours to be going. Be not loth to be searched, there will need then no further search to prove thee unsound; if Gods Officer be denied entrance, all is not right within. Now to help thee in the work enquire,

CHAP. VIII.

Rules laid down for tryal of the sincerity of our hearts in Prayer, with a help or two towards the getting this grace.

SECT. I.

First, What is thy care in performing this duty of prayer in secret? if thy heart be sincere, it will delight in privacy. A false heart calls others to see his zeal for God. May be he is forward to put himself upon duty where he hath spectators to applaud him, and can be very hot and earnest at the work; but either he is wholly a stranger to secret prayer, or else he is cold in the performance; he finds himself becalmed, now he wants the breath of others to fill his sails. The plummets are off which quickned his motion, and he moves heavily to what he did before company. Whereas a sincere Christian never finds more freedom of spirit, and liquefaction of soul, than in his solitary addresses to God. *Joseph*, when he would give full vent to his passion, sought some secret place where to weep, and therefore retired himself into his Chamber, *Gen. 43.* so the sincere Christian goes to his Closet, and there easeth his heart into the bosom of God, and lets his passions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, burst forth and have their full scope, which in publick prayer he restrains (as to the outward expression of them) out of a holy modesty, and fear of being observed

by others, which he hunts not for. Now speak, Christian, what is thy temper? can thy Closet witness for thee in this particular? It is the trick of a hypocrite to strein himself to the utmost in duty, when he hath spectators, and to draw loose in his gears when alone; like some that carry their best meat to Market, and save the worst for their own food at home; and others that draw their best Wine to their Customers, but drink the dead and flat themselves at their own private table.

Secondly, Observe thy self in thy more publick addresses to the Throne of grace, and that in two particulars; *First*, when thou prayest before others; *Secondly*, when thou joynest with others that pray. *First*, When thou prayest before others; observe on what thou bestowest thy chief care and zeal, whether in the externals or internals of prayer, that which is exposed to the eye and ear of men, or that which should be prepared for the eye and ear of God; the devout posture of thy body, or the inward devotion of thy soul; the pomp of thy words, or the power of thy faith; the agitation of thy bodily spirits in the vehemency of thy voice, or the fervency of thy spirit in heart-breaking affections. These inward workings of the soul in prayer, are the very soul of prayer, and all the care about the other without this, is like the trim-

trimming bestowed upon a dead body, that will not make the carcase sweet, nor these thy prayer to Gods Nostrils. It is the Faith, Love, Brokenness of heart for sin, and the inward affections exerted in prayer, that like *Elijah* in his fiery Chariot mount up to God in the Heavens, while the other with the *Prophets* Mantle fall to the ground. The sincere soul dares not be rude in his outward posture, he is careful of his very words and phrase, that they be grave and pertinent, neither would he pray them asleep that joyn with him, by a cold, dreaming, and lazy manner of delivering of it; but still it is the inward disposition of his heart he principally looks to, knowing well, that by the other he is but Cook to others, and may fast himself, if his own heart be idle in the duty; and therefore he doth not count he pray well (though to the affecting of their hearts) except he find his own affections drawn out in the duty. Whereas the hypocrite, if he may but come off the duty with the applause of others in the external performance, is very well pleased, though he be conscious of the deadness, naughtiness of his own heart therein. Secondly, When thou joynest with another that prayeth. Do the Gifts and Graces that breath from others in prayer, warm thy affections, and draw out thy soul to bear them company to Heaven in the petitions they put up? or do they stir up a secret envying and repining at the gifts of God bestowed on them? This would discover much pride and unsoundness in thy spirit. The hypocrite is proud, and think all the water is spilt and lost that runs beside his own Mill: whereas the sincere soul prizeth the gifts of others, can heartily bless God for them, and make a humble and holy use of them; his heart is as much affected with the holy savoury requests that another puts up, as when they come out of his own mouth. But the hypocrites eye is evil, because Gods is good.

SECT. II.

3. Observe whether thy fervency in prayer be uniform; a false heart may seem very hot in praying against one sin, but he can skip over another, and either leave it out of his confession, or handles it very gently, as a partial witness, that would save the Prisoners life he comes against, will not speak all he knows, but minceth his evidence; thus doth the hypocrite deal with his darling Lust, he is like one that mows grafs with a gapp'd Sythe, some he cuts down, and others he leaves standing; vehement against this, and favourable to that lust; whereas sincerity makes clear work as it goes. *Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me*, Psal. 119. 132. Again, The false heart is as uneven in his petitions as in his deprecations, very earnest he is for some mercies, and they are commonly of an inferiour nature, but more indifferent in his desires for those that are greater; he tythes Mint and Cummin in his prayers, (temporal mercies I mean) but neglects the weightier things of the promise, the sanctifying Graces of the Spirit, Humility, Heavenly-mindedness, Contentati-

on, Self-denial, a little of these upon a Knifes point will content him.

Fourthly, Observe whether thy endeavours correspond with thy prayers; the false heart seems hot in prayer, but you will find him cold enough at work; he prays very fiercely against his sins, as if he desired them to be all slain upon the place; but what doth he towards the speeding of them with his own hands? Doth he set himself upon the work of Mortification? doth he withdraw the fewel that feeds them? is he careful to shun occasions that may ensnare him? when temptations come, do they find him in Arms upon his Guard, resolved to resist their motion? Alas, no such matter; if a few good words in prayer will do the work, well and good; but as for any more, he is too lazy to go about it. Whereas the sincere heart is not idle after prayer, when it hath given Heaven the Alarm, and called God in to his help, then he takes the Field himself, and opposeth his Lusts with all his might, watching their motions, and taking every advantage he meets with to fall upon them, every mercy he receives he beats it out into a Weapon to knock down all thoughts of sinning again. Thus *Ezra*, chap. 9. *Seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* O God forbid, saith the holy soul, that he should bid such a thought welcome; every promise he reads, he lifts it up as a Sword for his defence against this enemy, *Having these promises, let us cleanse our selves*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

I shall shut up this Head with a few Directions how we may get this sincere heart in prayer.

SECT. III.

First, Get thy heart united by faith to Christ; it is faith that purifies the heart from its false principles and ends in duty. God made man upright, and while he stood so, his eye and foot went right, neither did his eye look, or his foot tread awry; but after *Eve* had talked with the Serpent she and all mankind after her learnt the Serpents crooked motion, to look one way, and go another; *God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions*, Eccles. 7. 29. O beg therefore with *David*, that God would renew a right spirit within thee, *Psal. 51*. What the evil spirit hath perverted, the holy Spirit alone can set right. If the cause why a Piece carries wrong, be in its Make and Mold, it must be new cast, or it will never carry right. Hypocrisie in duty comes from the falseness of mans depraved nature, the heart therefore must be made new before it can be sincere. The new heart is the single heart, *Ezek. 11. 19*. *I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you*. He that loves truth in the inward parts, can put it there.

Secondly, Make hypocrisie in prayer appear as odious to thee as possibly thou canst, and thou needest not dress it up in any other than its own clothes to do this. Consider but how grievous a sin, and how great a folly it is, and me-thinks it were enough to set thee against it. First, Consider what

what a grievous sin it is. A Lie spoken by one man to another, is a sin capable of high aggravations; what then is that lie which is uttered in prayer to God? surely this must be much more horrid, for here is blasphemy in the untruth. God spares not to give the hypocrite the lie, *Hos. 11. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit*; so many lies they told to God, as prayers they put up. O the patience of a God, that doth not strike the hypocrite dead upon the place, while the lie is in his throat, as he did *Ananias and Saphira*. Secondly, It is a great folly; first, as it is infeasible. Who but a fool can think to blind the eyes of the Almighty? canst thou cover the eye of the Sun with thy hand or hat, that it shall not shine? as unable art thou to hide thy secret designs so close, that the great God should not see them. Secondly, As it is impossible to deceive God, so thou puttest a woful cheat upon thy self; thou thinkest thou mendest the matter by praying, and thou makest it worse; when thou comest on thy trial for thy life, thy hypocrisy in prayer will cost thee dearer than thy other sins; thou takest pains to encrease thy condemnation; thou dost as *Solomon* saith of another kind of hypocrite, *Prov. 1. 17. Lay wait for thy own blood, and lurk privily for thy own life*. Of all sinners, the hypocrite hath the precedency in Gods purposes and preparations of wrath; Hell is prepared for them as the first born of damnation, *Math. 24. 51*. Other sinners are said to have *their portion with hypocrites*, as the younger brethren with their elder who is the Heir.

Thirdly, Crucifie thy affections to the world. Hypocrisy in Religion springs from the bitter root of some carnal affection unmortif'd. So long as thy prey lies below, thy eye will be to the earth,

even when thou seemest like an Eagle to mount in thy prayers to heaven. The false heart does *mi Deo ut fruatur mundo*, he useth Religion for secular ends, and makes his seeming piety to God but as a horning-block to get into the Creatures Saddle; God is in his mouth, but the world is in his heart, which he projects to attain more easily by the reputation that this will gain him. I have read of one that offered his Prince a great sum of money, for no more, but to have leave once or twice a day to come into his presence, and only say, *God save your Majesty*; the Prince wondring at his large offer for so small a favour, asked him, What this would advantage him? O Sir, saith he, this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the Country for one that is a great Favourite at Court; and such an opinion will help me to more by the years end, than I am out for the purchase. Thus some (it is to be feared) by the very name which they get for great Saints among their Neighbours, from their acquaintance with religious duties, do facilitate their carnal projects, and advance their worldly interests that lie at the bottom of all their goodly profession. Well, Christian, this is but to play at small game; to fish for any of this worlds petty enjoyments with religions golden hook. As thou lovest thy soul, and wouldest not lose this for ever, to get that which thou must lose after thou hast got it, mortifie those carnal affections which thou findest most likely to withdraw thy heart from God. Thou knowest not God, if thou seest not enough in him to make thee happy without the worlds contributions; this thoroughly believed will make thee sincere in his service. *I am God Almighty, walk before me and be thou perfect*, said God to *Abraham*, *Gen. 17. 1*.

CHAP. IX.

Sheweth, the acceptable prayer is that which is in the Spirit, and what is required to pray in the Holy Ghost.

HAVING dispatch'd the first importance of this Phrase, *Praying in the Spirit*, viz. the spirit of the person that prayeth, and shewn, that then a person prays in the Spirit, when his own soul and spirit acts in the duty, when he prays with understanding, fervency, and sincerity. Now we proceed to the second importance of the phrase, To pray in the spirit is to pray in or with the spirit of God, *Jude verse 20. Praying in the Holy Ghost*. So that the Note to be insisted on, will be this,

Note. That to right praying it is necessary, that we pray in or by the Spirit of God. Prayer it is the Creatures act, but the Spirits gift. There is a concurrence both of the Spirit of God, and the soul or spirit of the Christian to the performance of it. Hence we find both the Holy Spirit is said to pray in us, *Rom. 8. 26*. and we said to pray in

him, *Jude verse 20*. By the first is meant his inspiration, whereby he excites and assists the Creature to and in the work; by the latter the concurrence of the Saints faculties. The Spirit doth not so pray in him, as that the Christian doth not exercise his own faculties in the duty, as the *Familist*, fondly conceive. In handling this point I shall endeavour to do these three things.

First, I shall assert the point, and prove the truth of it.

Secondly, explicate what it is to pray by the Spirit of God.

Thirdly, Make some Application of the Point.

SECT. I.

First, to assert the truth of the point, that to right praying it is necessary we pray by the Spirit of God; this is clear from *Ephes. 2. 18. Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father*; mark those words, by one Spirit. As there is but one Mediator to appear and pray for us in Heaven, so but one spirit that can pray in us, and we by it on earth. We may as well venture to come to the Father through another Mediator than his Son, as pray by another Spirit than by the Holy Ghost. Therefore our Saviour, when he would shew the dislike of the Disciples rash motion, he doth it by telling them, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, Luk. 9. 55.* as if he had said, it behoves you to be well acquainted with the Spirit that acts you in prayer, if your prayers be not breathed in and out by my holy Spirit, they are abominable to Me and my Father also. The Name of Christ is not more necessary, than the Spirit of Christ is in prayer; Christ's Name fits only the Spirit's mouth, it is too great a word for any to speak as he ought, that hath not the Spirit to help him: *None can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 12. 13.* One may say the words, without any special work of the spirit in him, and so may a Parrot; but to say Christ is Lord believingly, with thoughts and affections comporting with the greatness and sweetness thereof, requires the Spirit of God to be in his heart and tongue. Now it is not the bare naming Christ in prayer, and saying, For the Lords sake, that procures our welcome with God, but saying it in faith; and none can do this without the Spirit. Christ is the door that opens into Gods presence, and lets the soul into his very bosom, faith is the Key that unlocks the door; but the Spirit is he that makes this Key, and helps the Christian to turn it in prayer, so as to get any access to God. You know in the Law it was a sin, not only to offer *strange incense*, but also to bring *strange fire, Levit. 10. 1.* by the incense, which was a composition of sweet spices, appointed by God to be burnt as a sweet perfume in his nostrils, was signified the merit and satisfaction of Christ, who being bruised by his Fathers wrath, did offer himself a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. By the fire that was put to the incense, (which also was appointed to be taken from the Altar, and not any common hearth) was signified the Spirit of God, by which we are to offer up all our prayers and praises, even as Christ offered himself up by the eternal Spirit. To plead Christs merits in prayer, and not by the Spirit, is to bring right incense, but strange fire, and so our prayers are but smoak, offensive to his pure eyes, not incense, a sweet savour to his nostrils.

SECT. II.

Secondly, I proceed to explicate what it is to pray by the Spirit of God. To the better opening of this, we must know, there are two ways

that the Spirit of God helps persons in prayer; one way is by his Gifts, the other by his Grace.

First, The Spirit of God helps in prayer by his Gifts; now those Gifts which he furnishes a person with for prayer, are either Extraordinary or Ordinary; the Extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in prayer were in the Primitive times shed forth, whereby the Apostles and others were able in a miraculous manner to pray as well as preach on a sudden, in a language that they never had learnt: of this gift, Interpreters understand that passage of Paul, *1 Cor. 14. 15. I will pray with the Spirit; and with understanding also*; that is, He will make use of this extraordinary gift Christ had furnished him with, but so as he might edifie the Church by it, and no otherwise. This extraordinary gift was fitted for the infancy of the Gospel Church, and ceased (as others of the like nature did) with it. The ordinary gift of the Spirit in prayer is that special faculty whereby persons are enabled on a sudden to form the conceptions of their minds, and desires of their hearts, into apt words before the Lord in prayer; this is a common gift, and is bestowed very oft on those that are none of the best men; the hypocrite may have more of this gift than some sincere Christian. It is a gift that commonly bears proportion to natural endowments, a ready apprehension, fruitful fancy, voluble tongue, and audacity of spirit, which are all gifts of the Spirit, and do dispose a person for this. Now we see that the head may be ripe, and the heart rotten; and on the contrary, the heart sound and sincere, where the head is low-parted.

Secondly, The Spirit helps in prayer by his grace. His gifts help to the outward expression, but his grace to the inward affection. By the gifts of the Spirit a person is enabled to take the ear, and affect the heart of men that hear him; but by the grace of the spirit acting a soul in prayer, he is enabled to move his own heart, and the heart of God also; and this is the man that indeed prays in the spirit, the other hath the gift, but this hath the *spirit of prayer*.

Now there is a twofold grace necessary to pray thus in the spirit; first, grace from the Spirit to sanctifie the person that prays; secondly, grace to act and assist this person sanctified in prayer. By the first, the spirit dwells in the soul; by the second, he acts the soul.

First, There is necessary to this praying in the Spirit, grace to sanctifie the person. Before the creature is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, it can neither apprehend nor desire things aright; *The carnal mind perceives not the things of God, nay, it is enmity to God*: and how is such a one fit to pray in an acceptable manner? First, then, the spirit renews the creature, by infusing those supernatural qualities, or habits of his saving sanctifying graces, which makes him a new creature; by these he comes to dwell and live in him, and then he acts his own graces thus infused. The soul is in the body before it acts and moves it; we read of *living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, Gal. 5. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit*; walking supposeth life. To pray, hear, or perform

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any other holy action in a holy manner, is to walk in the spirit; but we must live in the spirit, or the spirit live in us (which is all one) before we can thus walk in the spirit. There are some acts indeed the spirit of God puts forth upon souls, that are not thus sanctified, acts of common illumination, restraining grace, and assisting also; thus many hypocrites are enabled to pray in excellent expressions, but he never did assist hypocrite, or any un sanctified person, to perform the inward part of prayer, to mourn sincerely for sin, to pant after Christ and his Grace, or to cry, *Abba Father*, believingly; these are vital acts of the new creature, and flow from a spirit of Grace infused into the soul, from which follows this *Spirit of supplication*, Zech. 12. 10.

Secondly, As habitual grace is required to sanctify the person, so actual grace to assist him as oft as he prays. The spirit of God may dwell in a soul by his habitual grace, yet deny actual assistance to

this or that particular duty; and then the poor Christian is becalmed, as a Ship at Sea when no Wind is stirring. *For as Grace cannot evidence itself, so neither can it act itself. Hence it is, that sometimes the Saints Prayer speeds no better, because he is not acted by the spirit in it. *Samson* when his Lock was cut, was weak like another man; a Saint, when the spirit of God denies his help, prays no better than a carnal man. The spirit of God is a free Agent, *Uphold me* (saith *David*) *with thy free Spirit*, Psal. 51. He is not as a Prisoner tied to the Oar, that must needs work when we will have him; but as a Prince, when he pleaseth he comes forth and shews himself to the soul, and when he pleaseth he retires and will not be seen. What freer than the wind? not the greatest King on earth can command it to rise for his pleasure; to this the spirit of God is compared, *John* 4. He is not only free to breath where he lists, in this soul, and not in that, but when he pleaseth also.

CHAP. X.

Sheweth what assistance the Holy Ghost gives a Saint in prayer, more than any other person.

Quest. But the Question will here be, What assistance doth the spirit of God give a Saint in prayer more than another person?

Ans. First, in general: The assistance which the spirit of God gives a Saint in prayer above another, lies deep, it is laid out upon the inward man, and inward part of the duty. So that a person may come to know whether himself prays in the spirit, but he cannot judge so easily of another. Now this special assistance consists in these three Particulars.

First, The Spirit puts forth an act of exultation upon the soul, to stir up his affections; never was any formal prayer of the holy spirits making; when the spirit comes, it is a time of life; the Christians affections spring in his bosom at his voice, as the *Babe* in *Elizabeth* at the salutation of the *Virgin Mary*, or as the strings under the Musicians hands stir and speak harmoniously, so doth also the Saints affections at the secret touch of the spirit. He excites the Saints fear, filling it with such a sense of Gods greatness, his own nothingness and baseness, as makes him with awful thoughts reverence the divine Majesty he speaks unto, and deliver every petition with a holy trembling upon his spirit. Such a fear was upon *Abrahams* spirit, when in his prayer for *Sodom* he expressed how great an adventure he made, being but dust and ashes, to take upon him to speak unto the Lord. He excites the Christians mourning affections, by his divine breath he raiseth the clouds of the Saints past sins, and when he hath overspread his soul in meditation with the sad remembrance of them, then in prayer he melts the Clouds, and dissolves his heart into soft

showers of Evangelical mourning, that the Christian sighs and groans, weeps and mourns like a Child that is beaten, though he sees the Rod laid out of his heavenly Fathers hand, and fears no wrath from him for them. The *Apostle* tells us, the groans and sighs which the spirit helps the Saint to, are such as cannot be uttered, *Rom.* 8. 26. no, not by the Saint himself, who being unable to translate the inward grief he conceives into words, is fain sometimes to send it with this inarticulate voice to heaven, yet a voice that is well understood there, and more musical in Gods ear than the most ravishing Musick can be to ours. In a word, he stirs up affections suitable to every part of prayer, enabling the gracious soul to confess sin with an aching heart, as if he felt so many swords raking in it; to supplicate mercy and grace, as with inward feeling of his wants, so with vehement desires to have them satisfied; and to praise God with a heart enlarged and carried on high upon the wings of love and joy. Parts may art it in the phrase and composure of the words (as a Statuary may carve a goodly Image, with all the outward Lineaments, and beautiful Proportions in every part) but still it is but the Counterfeit and Image of a true prayer, for want of that *aliquid intus* which should give life and energy to it. This the spirit of God alone can effect.

Secondly, As the spirit of God doth excite the Christians affections in prayer, so he regulates and directs them. Who indeed but the spirit of God can guide and rein these fiery Steeds? He is said in this respect to help our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, *Rom.* 8. 26. We alas are

are prone to over-bend the Bow in some petitions, and want strength to bend it enough in some other; one while we over-shoot the Butt, praying absolutely for that which we should ask conditionally; another time we shoot beside the mark, either by praying for what God hath not promised, or too selfishly for that which is promised. Now the spirit helps the Christians infirmity in this respect, for he *maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God, vers. 27.* that is, he so holds the reins of their affections, and directs them, that they keep their right way and due order, not flying out into unwarrantable heats, and inordinate desires. He by his secret whispers instructs them, when to let out their affections full speed, and when to take them up again; he teacheth them the law of prayer, that striving lawfully they may not lose the prize. Just as the Spirit was in the living creatures to direct their motion, of whom it is said, *They went every one straight forward, whither the Spirit was to go they went, and turned not when they went, Ezek. 1. 12.* So the spirit acting his Saints in Prayer, keeps them that they lash out neither on this hand nor on that, but go straight forward, and draw their requests by his rule.

Thirdly, He fills the Christian with a holy confidence and humble boldness in prayer. Sin makes the face of God dreadful to the sinner, guilty A-

dam shuns his presence, and tells the reason, *I heard thy voice, and was afraid.* If the Patriarchs (being conscious how barbarously they had used their brother Joseph) were terrified at his presence, and so abashed that they could not answer him; how much more confounded must the sinner be, to draw near to the great God, when he remembers the horrid sins he hath perpetrated against him? Now the Spirit easeth the Christians heart of this fear, assuring him that Gods heart meditates no revenge upon him, but freely forgives what wrong he hath done him; yea, which is more, that he takes him for his dear child, and that the Christian may not stand in doubt thereof, he seals it with a kiss of love upon his heart, leaving there the impression of Gods fatherly love fairly stamped, whereby the Christian comes to have amiable thoughts of God, is able to call God Father, and expect the kind welcome of a child at his hands. This is the Spirit of Adoption which the Apostle speaks of, *Rom. 8. 15.* That chafeth away all servile fear and dread of God from the soul, *Ye have not received again the spirit of bondage to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.* And, *Gal. 4. 6.* *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.*

CHAP. XI.

Areproof to those that make a mock of having the Spirit, and praying by the Spirit; also a trial whether we have the Spirit or no.

SECT. I.

Use. First, Take heed of blaspheming the holy Spirit, as to this work of his in his Saints. Some are so desperately prophane, that they dare flout and jeer at those who shew any strictness in their lives, or zeal in the worship of God, especially in this duty of prayer, with this, These are they that have the Spirit, that pray (forsooth) by the Spirit; nay more, (I tremble to speak it) some have called their praying by the Spirit, praying by the Devil. That every gracious soul hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him, the Scripture tells us, *Rom. 8. 9.* *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.* That God hath promised his Spirit to help his Saints prayer, is undeniable, and that he accepts no prayer but what is put up by his spirit, is as sure. Now maist thou not know, bold wretch, what spirit thou art acted by, who makest a mock of having the spirit, and praying by the spirit? who but a Devil would set thee on work to blaspheme the Spirit of God? but why should we wonder, that the actings of the holy spirit in the Saints should be thus scorned and blasphemed, seeing we find that the spirit of God,

working so mightily in Christ himself, was maliciously interpreted by the wicked Pharisees to be from the Devil? *Math. 12. 24.* But let such know to their tetrour, that to make a jeer of the spirit, or to attribute his works to the Devil, if it be maliciously done, will be found to come near the blasphemy of the spirit, which is unpardonable; see *verse 32.* *Whoever shall speak a word against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him in this world, neither in the world to come.* And this our Saviour speaks, upon their attributing what he did by the Spirit of God to the spirit of the Devil.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Try whether you have the spirit of God or no. A prayerless state is a sad state to live in. Now thou canst not pray acceptably except thou prayest in the spirit, and thou canst not pray in the spirit except thou hast the spirit in thee.

Quest. But how may I know whether I have the spirit of God or no?

Answ. First, I shall answer negatively by what
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thou must not conclude that thou hast the spirit. *Secondly*, Affirmatively, by what thou maist.

First, *Negatively*, not because thou hast now and then some good motions from the holy spirit stirred in thee; the evil spirit is found oft stirring evil motions in souls, where he doth not dwell, a foul stir he makes oft in the bosom of a Saint, yet dwells not there, because he is not there *per modum quietis*, he finds no rest in these dry places, therefore he is brought in, saying, *I will return to my house*, viz. To those that are yet in a carnal state, where he can rule the rost, and command as a Master doth all in his house. Truly thus the holy spirit is often moving in the consciences and affections of carnal creatures, counselling, rebuking, and exciting them; so that upon his suggestions, some flashy short pangs of affections are raised in them to that which is good, but presently all is quast and comes to nothing, and the spirit driven away by the churlish entertainment he finds. *Secondly*, Not by the common gifts of the spirit, illumination, conviction, restraining grace, and assistance to perform the external part of Religious duties, even to the admiration sometimes of others that hear them; these are gifts of the spirit, but such as do not prove he hath the spirit that hath them; they are like the brightness or radiancy which we see the clouds gilt with in the morning before the body of the Sun is above the Horizon, they shew the Sun is near, but it is not yet risen for all this radiancy that is seen; So these gifts are beamed from the spirit of God and shew the Kingdom of God is come nigh such a one; but they do not demonstrate that the spirit of God is come into that soul, and hath taken possession of it for his house and Temple; or they are like the tokens which a suitor sends to a person whom he is wooing to be his Wife (the more to insinuate upon her) but the match breaking off, all are required again. Many have these gifts sent them by the spirit of God, with whom the Match betwixt Christ and them was never made up, and if they be not called for back in this life, they shall however be accountable for them at the great Day.

SECT. III.

Secondly, Affirmatively, by what thou maist conclude that thou hast the spirit of God, and that in two particulars; though here I might multiply,

First, If thou beest regenerated by the spirit. The spirit of God dwells only in a new Creature. So long as a man continues in his carnal natural state, he is destitute of the spirit. *Sensual having not the Spirit*, Jude verse 19. the word is *ψυχικός*, such as have no more but a reasonable soul, without a higher principle of life than Nature gives to all men. S. Paul useth the word to set out a man in his meer naturals, as opposed to another that hath a principle of supernatural life from the spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *ψυχικός ἀνὴρ*, the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit. But here the Question will be, How shall I know I am regenerate? To this I answer, Every regenerate soul hath *divinam*

indolem, a divine nature and disposition, like unto the spirit of God that regenerates him, Job. 3. 6. *That which is born of the spirit is spirit*, viz. is spiritual, the abstract being put for the concrete, to encrease the force of the words. He hath a soul raised as far above natural men, as they are above the nature of beasts. When *Nebuchadnezzar* had the understanding of a man given him, he grazed no longer among the beasts of the field, but returned to his Princely Throne and life. Thus the regenerate soul returns to that high and heavenly disposition, which man in his primitive holy state once had; now God, and the things of God take up his thoughts, he hath a new eye to see vanity, where before he placed felicity; a new gust and taste, which makes him spit out those sinful pleasures as poison, that once were his pleasant morsels, and count all earthly enjoyments, that before were his only feast, but dung and dross in comparison of Christ and his grace; he can no more make a meal on them, than a man can with dogs meat. Rom. 5. 5. *They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit*; *ἐπερωσαν*, they do savor, savour the things of the spirit. Find therefore what thy gust is, and thou maist know what thy life is, whether spiritual or natural.

Secondly, If thou beest led by the spirit. The spirit is the Saints guide, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God*. As the soul is in the body to direct and move it, so is the spirit in the soul, *Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel* (saith David) Psal. 73. 23, 24. Even as the child is led by his Fathers hand, so the Saint by the manuduction of the spirit. Now to be led by the spirit of God, imports these three things. First, A sense of our own weakness and ignorance. He that thinks he knows his way, or that he is able to direct his own steps, will not accept of a Guide; it is the weak child, or the blind man, that calls to be led: first, *Saul* was struck blind, and then he gives his hand to be led to *Damascus*, Act. 9. Enquire therefore whether God hath made thee sensible of thy own ignorance and impotency. Man by nature is proud and self-conceited, he leans much to his own understanding, and stands upon his own strength, very loth to be thought out of the way, or unable to go of himself in it; *The wise feareth and departeth from evil, but the fool rageth and is confident*, Prov. 14. 16. Tell a soul spiritually wise he is out of the way, he fears himself, hearkens to the counsel, and turns back; but a fool (and such is every carnal man) he falls out with him that counsels or reproves him, and is confident he is right, as if he knew the way to Heaven as well as he doth the way from his house to the market. The first thing that the spirit doth is, to dismount the soul from this high opinion he hath of himself, thereby to make him teachable and tractable. Men and brethren (say those Converts, after God with one prick in their hearts had let out this wind of pride) what shall we do? Acts 2. 37. Their spirits now comes down, willing they are to be directed, so meek and humble that a child may lead them. *Secondly*, He

He that is led by another, is ruled and determined by him that is his Guide, which way he should go. Enquire therefore whether the Spirit of God doth thus determine thy soul in its actings and motions; if thou beest led by the Spirit, thou walkest after the Spirit, and goest the way he goes. Now you know which is the Spirit's Walk, he is a Spirit of truth and leads into truth; the Word of God is the Road he keeps, if thou walkest not by this Rule, he is not thy Guide. Speak therefore, what Authority and sway bears the Word with thee? dost thou consult with it, and harken to it? or is it to thee as *Micajah* was to *Ahab*, art thou afraid to advise with it? or when thou dost, canst thou cast its counsel at thy heels, and venture to break its hedge to pursue thy ambitious or covetous projects? if a word lying in thy way will not stop thee, thou art not led by the Spirit of God, thou maiest be sure. *Lastly*, To be led imports spontaneity and willing-

ness; this is the difference betwixt leading and driving: The carnal heart may be driven by the rebukes and convictions of the Spirit, as a beast by switch and spur; but the gracious soul follows the Spirit, as a Child his Father that holds him by the hand, yea, that cries after his Father to take him along with him. *Where the Spirit is, there is Liberty.* The Spirit indeed draws, but then the soul runs after him. *Mary* chose the better part; it was not imposed on her against her liking. The obedience of the Saints is compared to a sacrifice; *Rom. 12. 2. Present your bodies a living sacrifice*, &c. and it is no acceptable sacrifice, that is not offered willingly. The Spirit of God makes the soul willing in the day of his power. *I will go with this man* (saith *Rebecca*) she was as willing to have *Isaac* as he to have her. The gracious soul answers the Spirit's call; as the echo the voice, *Seek my face; Thy face will I seek.*

C H A P. XII.

An Exhortation to them that at present want the Spirit of Grace and Prayer, with some Directions how to obtain it.

NOW this Use of Trial calls for a double word of Exhortation: *First*, To those that upon examination find they are destitute of the Spirit. *Secondly*, To those that by the rules of Trial find the Spirit of God is in them.

S E C T. I.

First, To you that are yet without the Spirit of God, O labour to get this heavenly Guest to come and dwell in your hearts. Better it were thou hadst not the spirit of a man, than to want the Spirit of God. If the holy Spirit be not in thee, assure thyself the evil spirit is, and no way is there for thee to turn this troublesome Guest out of doors, but by getting the Spirit of God in. Thou maist know where thy eternal mansion will be, in heaven or hell hereafter, by the Spirit that fills and acts thy soul here; if God takes not up thy soul as a mansion for his Spirit on earth, it shews that he prepares no mansion for thy soul in heaven, but leaves thee to be entertained by him in the other world that is thy Guest in this. Thus thou seest how thy soul hangs over the infernal Pit; what course canst thou take to prevent this thy endless misery that is coming upon thee? Wilt thou stand up as *Human* to make request for the life of thy soul? Alas, thou canst not pray though thy life lies on't, thou wantest the Spirit of God that should help thee to groans and sighs; thou must live before thou canst breath. Prayer you see is not a work of Nature, but a gift of Grace; not a matter of will and parts, got by humane skill and art, but taught and inspired by the Holy Ghost. At the Bar of man, the Orators tongue may so smooth over a cause as to carry it; Rhetor-

icka hath kind of Spell in it that charms the ears of men, *Isa. 3. 3.* he is called, *The eloquent Orator*, נבון ודש he that is skilful in a charm: thus *Abigail* charmed *David's* passion with a well set speech, and returned his sword into his scabbard, that was drawn to cut off her Husband and his Family. But words alas, how handsomely soever they chime, make no Musick in Gods ear, they avail no more with him when his holy Spirit is not in them, than *Esau's* prayers and tears did with old *Isaac* for the blessing. The same Rod which wrought Miracles in *Moses* his hand, would have done no such thing in the hand of another, because not acted with the Spirit that *Moses* had. The same words put up in prayer by a mans own private spirit, are weak and ineffectual, yea, distastful and abominable; which delivered by the Spirit of God into another, are mighty with God, and exceedingly acceptable to him. *Kings* have their Cooks, and eat not but what is dressed by their hands: The great God I am sure will not like that Sacrifice which his Spirit doth not prepare and offer. Those prayers which are highly esteemed and applauded by men are sometimes a great abomination to the Lord, who sees the heart to be naught and wholly void of his Spirit and Grace. And on the contrary, those prayers which are despised and harshly censured by man, may be highly pleasing to God. *Eli* was offended with *Hanna*, and took her for a drunken woman; but God knew her better, that she was not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit in prayer, and therefore answered graciously her Request. It was wisely done of that *Grecian*, who being sent Ambassador to a forreign Prince, studied the Language of the Country, that he

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might the more effectually persuade the King, by delivering his Embassie in his own tongue. O get thou the Spirit of God, that thou maist pray to God in the language of heaven, and no fear but thou shalt speed. Now if thou wouldst obtain the Spirit,

S E C T. II.

First, Labour to be deeply sensible of thy deplorable state while without the Spirit; an unfavourable sapless creature thou art (God knows) unable for any duty, incapable of any comfort. The Spirit is oft in Scripture compared to water, rain and dew; now as the earth is barren, and can bring forth no fruit without these, so is the heart of man without the Spirit of God. O get thy soul affected with this. When the fields are burnt up for want of rain, man and beast make a moan, yea the very earth it self, cleft with drought, by opening its thirsty mouth, expresth its extream need of some kind showers from the heavens to refresh it: And hast thou no sense of thy woful condition? which is worse, thinkest thou, to have the earth Iron, or thy heart Stone? That the fruits and beasts of the field should perish for want of water, or thy soul for want of the spirit? O couldst thou but be brought to lament thy want, there were hope of having it supplied, *Isa. 44. 3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed.*

Secondly, When thou art inwardly scorch'd with the sense of thy spiritless graceless condition, go and earnestly beg this gift of God; now thou goest in a good time, and maist hope to speed. Possibly thou hast heretofore prayed for the Spirit, but so slightly and indifferently, that thou hast grieved his Spirit while thou hast been praying for him; but now thou seeest thy need of him, and thy self undone except thou maist get him, and therefore I hope thou wilt not now shut the door upon thy own prayers, by being a cold Suitor; which if thou dost not, thou art sure to bring him away with thee. Christ himself assures thee as much, take it from his own mouth, *Luke 11. 13. If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.* A Father may deny his wanton Child bread to play with, and throw under his feet, but not his starving Child that cries for bread to preserve his life. God can and will deny him that asks the Spirit, to pride himself with his gifts, but not the hungry soul, that pinched with his want of grace, humbly, yet vehemently, cries, Lord, give me thy Spirit, or else I starve, I die. Nay let me tell thee, thy strong cries and earnest prayers for the Spirit, would be a sweet evidence to thee, that thou hast him already within thee.

Thirdly, Plant thy self under the Word preached, this is *Vehiculum Spiritus*, the Spirits Chariot in which he rides, call'd therefore the *ministration of the Spirit*. The Serpent, that evil spirit, wrigled into Eve's heart by her ear, and the holy Spirit ordinarily enters in at the same door; for he is re-

ceived by the hearing of Faith, *Gal. 3. 2.* They that cast off hearing the Word to meet with the Spirit do as if a man should turn his back of the Sun, that it may shine on his face. The poor do not stay at home for the rich to bring their Alms to their house, but go to their door, and there wait for relief. It becomes thee, poor creature, to wait at the Posts of wisdom, and not expect that the Spirit should lacquey after thee. If the Master come to the truant Scholars house, it is to whip him to School.

Fourthly, Take heed of resisting the Spirit when he makes his approaches to thee in the word, sometimes he knocks, and meeting a repulse, goes from the sinners door; this is dangerous. He that hath promised to come in if we open, hath not promised to come again though we unkindly send him away. He doth indeed oft return after repulses, but sometimes to shew his liberty, he doth not, nay, leaves a pad-lock, as I may so say, on the door, a judiciary hardness and unbelief, which no Ministers Key can open. Thus Christ dealt with them that so mannerly excused themselves to his Messengers that invited them, *Luke 14. 24. None of those men that were bidden shall taste of my Supper.* Doth the Spirit move on thy heart in an Ordinance? haply it is by some secret rebukes, directing the Ministers finger unawares to touch thy fore plat. O beware how thou now behavest thy self towards the Spirit. Quarrel not with the Preacher as if he had had a spite against thee, and came for a Spy to find out the nakedness of thy soul. Struggle not with thy convictions, smother not the motions of the holy Spirit in thy next pillow at night, but rather cherish and improve them. It is no little mercy, that as the Spirit went by in his Chariot, he would call at thy door, and give thee so merciful a warning, which if kindly received, may bring on a treaty of peace betwixt God and thee, that may end in thy conversion here, and salvation hereafter. It heightened the favour which God bestowed on the Widow of *Sarepta*, that there were many other Widows in *Israel* at the same time, but the Prophet was sent to her, and not to them; so it enhanceth this mercy vouchsafed to thee, that there should be many other sinners in the Congregation, and yet the Spirit not sent to them, but to thee; that his Arrows should fly over their heads, and be shot in at thy Window with a secret message from Heaven, to rouse thy sleepy Conscience, and wooe thy Affections from sin to Christ. Verily the Kingdom of Heaven is come nigh unto thee. Be but friendly to these his motions, and thou shalt have more of his company.

Fifthly, Converse with the Saints that have the Spirit of God in them. They that would learn a foreign Language, associate with men of that Country whose natural tongue it is. Wouldst thou have the Spirit, and so learn to speak to God in Heavens Language? Consort with those, who by reason of their heavenly nature will be speaking of God and the things of God unto thee. It is true, they cannot derive and propagate this their spiritual nature; but it is as true, that the Spirit of God may make the gracious discourses which they

they breath forth vital and quickning to thee ; while thou art with such, thou walkest in the spirits company. *Joseph and Mary* sought Christ among his kindred, supposing it most likely to find him among them. And it is more probable to find the spirit of Christ among the Saints, his spiritual kindred, than among strangers. The Spirit of God came upon *Saul* when among the prophets, at the hearing of them prophesie and praise God, his spirit was moved also to do the same. Who knows but thy heart may be warmed at their fire, and from the favour of their graces be drawn thy self to the love of holiness? But above all, take heed of prophane company, this is a great quencher to the Spirits work. When *David* resolves for God

and a holy life, he packs the wicked from him, *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God, Psal. 119. 115.* The Husbandman bulheth his young plants about to keep the Cattle off. If there be any buddings or puttings forth of the spirit of grace in thee, as thou wouldest not have all cropt and bit off, chuse not men of a prophane spirit-for thy associates, they are like the *North-wind* that blows away the rain. When the spirit of God hath been moving on a soul, the clouds begin to gather in his bosom, and some hopes of a shower of repentance to follow ; then comes wicked company and drives all these clouds away, till there be no shew left upon his heart of what before there were great hopes.

C H A P. XIII.

An Exhortation to the Saints not to grieve the Spirit, and how he is grieved in reference to his praying assistance.

Secondly, To the Saints, the word I have for you is to beseech you, not to grieve or quench the holy Spirit in your bosoms. Thou canst not fadge to live long without prayer if a Saint, nor art thou able to pray to purpose without him ; when he withdraws, thy hand presently will forget its cunning, such a chilnes will invade thy soul, that thou wilt have little list to pray, for it is he that stirs thee up to the duty ; and if thou creepest to it, thou wilt not be warm in the work, for it is his divine breath that must make thy green wood burn, thy affections enkindle. Cloaths do not warm the body, till the body warm them, and the body cannot warm them, except the soul, which is the principle of life, warm it. If there be no warmth in the heart, there can be no fervency in the prayer ; and without the Spirit of God (who is to the Christians soul what his soul is to his body) no kindly heat can be in the soul. O take heed therefore thou dost not grieve him, lest being distasted here refuse to assist thee. Now three ways the Spirit of God may be distasted by a Saint, so as to cause him to deny his wonted assistance in prayer.

First, By some sin secretly harboured in the heart ; *If I regard iniquity in my heart, thou wilt not hear, Psal.* Now when God refuseth to hear, we may be sure the spirit refuseth to assist ; for God never rejects a prayer that his Spirit indites, and his Son presents. Sin is so offensive to the holy spirit, that where ever it is bid welcome, he will shew his distaste. If you would have this pure Dove stay with you, be sure you keep his lodging clean. Hast thou defiled thy self with any known sin ? think not to have him help thee in prayer, till he hath helpt thee to repent of it ; he'll carry thee to the Laver before he go with thee to the Altar. The Musician wipes his instrument that hath fallen into the dirt, before he'll set it to his mouth. If thou wouldest

have the Spirit of God breath in thy soul at prayer, present it not to him besmeared with any sin unrepented of.

Secondly, By frequent resisting or putting off his motions. As the spirit helps in prayer, so he stirs up to prayer ; he is the Saints Remembrancer and Monitor, *He shall bring all things (saith Christ of the Spirit) to your remembrance, Joh. 14. 26.* God called *Jacob to Bethel*, so the spirit prompts the Saint to duty ; such a mercy thou hast received, up Christian, praise thy God for it while it is fresh in thy memory, and warm in thy heart ; such a temptation lies before thee, go pray that thou maist not be led into it. Thy God waits for thy company, and expects thy attendance, now is a fit time for thy withdrawing thy self to hold communion with him, and pay thy homage to him. Now when the Christian shall shift off these motions, and not take the hint he gives, but from time to time neglect his counsel, and discontinue his acquaintance with God notwithstanding these his *memories*, he is exceedingly distasted, and taking him self to be slighted, he gives over calling upon him, and leaves the soul for a time, till his absence, and the sad consequences of it, bring him to see his folly, and prepare him to entertain his motions more kindly for the future. Thus *Christ* leaves the Spouse in her bed, when she would not rise at his knock, and makes her trot after him many a weary step before he will be seen of her. It is just that God should raise the price of his mercy, when we may have it at an easie rate, and will not. Christ thrice calls up his drowsie Disciples to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation, but finds them still asleep when he comes ; what saith he then ? truly he bids them *sleep on*, as if he had said, Take your course and see what will come of it. Indeed they soon saw it to their sorrow, for they all presently fell into that very temptation, which

which their Matter had so seasonably alarm'd them by prayer to prevent, and this waked them to purpose.

Thirdly, By priding our selves in and with the assistances he gives. Pride is a sin that God resists wherever he meets it, for indeed it is a sin that justles with God himself for the wall. It is time for the spirit to be gone, when his house is let over his head; he takes it as a giving him warning to be gone, when the soul lifts up it self into his seat; if he may not have the honour of the work, he'll have no hand in it. Now the proud man makes the spirit an underling to himself, he useth his gifts to set up himself with them. Three ways pride discovers it self in prayer, and all to be resisted if we meant to have the spirits company. *First*, When the creature ascribes the spirits work to himself, and sets his own name upon the duty, where he should write the spirit, like *Caligula*, who set the figure of his own head on the Statue of *Jupiter*; instead of blessing God for assisting, he applauds himself, and hath a high opinion of his own abilities, pleasing himself with what expressions and enlargements of affection he had in the duty. This is plain Felony, a sin which every gracious soul must needs tremble at. Church-robbery is a great wickedness, O what then is Spirit-robbery? *I live* (saith *Paul*) yet not *I*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me*, *1 Cor.* 15. 10. Thus shouldest thou, Christian, say; I prayed, yet not I; I laboured and wrestled, yet not I, but the spirit of God, that was with me. Applaud not thy self, but humbly admire the grace and dignation of God, to help such a poor creature as thou art; thus *David* did, *Who am I and my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*, *1 Chron.* 29. 14. That Steward deserves to be put out of his office,

that brags of his Matters money as his own. *Secondly*, When we go to duty in confidence of the gifts and grace we have already received, and do not acknowledge our dependance on the spirit, by casting our selves after all our preparations upon him for present assistance. As we must pray by the spirit, so we must ask for him that we may pray by him; *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him*, *Luke* 11. 13. And it is not once asking for all will serve the turn; thou maist have his help in the morning, and want it at night, if thou dost not humbly ask again for his aid. You know how *Samson* was served, when he thought to go out as he used to do; alas, poor man, the case was altered, he was weak as water, the spirit was gone and had carried away his strength with him. God will have thee, O Christian, know, the Key to thy heart hangs at his girdle, and not thy own, that thou shouldest be able to open and enlarge it at thy pleasure. Acknowledge God, and his spirit shall help thee; but lean to thy own understanding, and thou art sure to catch a fall. When pride is in the saddle, shame is in the crupper; if pride be at the beginning of the duty, shame will be the end of it. *Thirdly*, When we rely on our prayers, and not entirely on Christs mediation for acceptance and audience; this is pride with a witness, and highly derogatory to the honour of Christ. God indeed accepts the Saints in prayer, but not for their prayer, but for Christs sake. Now the spirit, who is Christs messenger, will not, you may be sure, give his assistance, to rob Christ of his glory; when he helps thee to pray, if thou wouldest hearken to his voice, thou mightest hear him calling thee out of thy self, and confidence of thy prayers, to rely wholly on the mediation of Christ. Wrong Christ, and you are sure to grieve his Spirit.

CHAP. XIV.

The duty of watching opened, and why it must attend our Prayers.

Verf. 18. *And watching thereunto.*

THESE words present us with the fifth branch in the Apostles direction for prayer, which I called *Prayer's guard*. Prayer, to the Saints, is as the great Artillery to an Army, of great use to defend them, and of as great force to do execution upon their enemies, therefore needs the stronger guard to be set about it, lest it be taken from them, or turn'd against them by the enemy.

SECT. I.

Now the guard which the Spirit of God here appoints this great Ordinance of Prayer, is *Watching*, *watching thereunto*. Watching is either proper or improper, literal or metaphorical. Watching literally taken is an affection of the body; that only can properly be said to watch, which is subject to sleep;

sleep and so the body is not the soul. Thus to watch in a religious sense, is a voluntary denying of our bodies sleep, that we may spend either the whole or part of the night in pious exercises. Thus the Jews kept the night of the Passover holy, *Exod. 13. 42.* Our Saviour oft spent the night in prayer, *Matth. 14. Matth. 26. 38.* We find Paul treading in his Lord and Masters steps, *2 Cor. 6. 5.* In watchings and fastings. Many a sweet spiritual Junket holy Davids devout soul got in the night, when others lay a sleep in their bed, *Psal. 63. 6.* My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness—when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. No doubt, for a devout soul, upon some extraordinary occasions (so superstition be avoided, and health regarded) thus to watch unto prayer is not only laudable but delectable, *Vigilia in quantum valetudinem non perturbant, si orando, psallendo, legendo sumantur, in deliciis spirituales convertuntur. Augustinus.* Happy soul, that can thus steal in the dark into the arms of his beloved, and watch for devotion, while others watch to do mischief, or fill themselves with impure delights. This is the Christian, whose soul, like Gideon's fleece, shall be filled with the dews and influences of heaven above others.

But secondly, 'Watching is taken Metaphorically, for the vigilancy or watchfulness of the soul; this is principally meant here, and in other Scriptures, where we are commanded to watch, *Mark 13. 35. Rev. 16. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8. cum multis aliis.* Now we shall the better understand what duty is imposed upon the Christian under this word [watching] if we consider what bodily watching is; two things it imports, *waking and working*; when a man wakes in the night to attend some business then to be done, such a one only truly watcheth; a man that sleeps not in the night, but to no purpose, for no business that he hath to dispatch, he may be said to wake, but not to watch; for this relates to some employment he hath in charge to look to. Thus the Shepherds are said to keep watch over their flock in the night, *Luke 2. 8.* and the Disciples watcht with Christ, while they fate up to wait on him the night before his passion, *Matth. 26. 40.* So that for a Christian to watch in a spiritual sense, is to preserve his soul awake from sin in the night of this world, that he may keep the Lords charge, and do the duty imposed upon him as a Christian. Now Prayer being one principal duty he is to attend, and intend with all his might, therefore watching is very often joyned with it, *Matth. 26. 41. Mar. 13. 33. Luke 21. 36. Col. 4. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 7.* In handling this duty of watching unto prayer, I shall first shew, why the Christian is to watch unto prayer: Secondly, wherein the duty of watchfulness, in reference to prayer, consists: Thirdly, I shall set the Christians Watch for him, by giving some little counsel and help towards his constant performing this duty of watchfulness; for it is not a temporary duty, but for his whole life time. First, Why must the Christian watch to prayer?

SECT. II.

First, Because of the importance of the duty of Prayer; no one action doth a Christian meet with in his whole life, of greater weight and moment, than this of prayer is; and that in regard of God, or himself; first, In regard of God. Prayer is an act of religious Worship, we have immediately to do with the great God, to whom we approach in prayer. Now Religion is as tender as the eye, it is not a thing to be played with or handled, without great care and heedfulness. Prayer is too sacred a duty to be performed between sleeping and waking, with a heavy eye, or a drowsie heart; this God complain'd of, *There is none that calleth upon my Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of me, Isa. 64. 7.* He counts it no prayer where the heart is not stirred up and awake. No way can we more honour or dishonour God, than in prayer; O how then ought we to watch to this duty? Again, in regard of our selves; for our behaviour in prayer hath an universal influence into all the passages of our whole life; as a man is in this duty, so he is likely to be in all the rest; if careless in praying, then slighty in hearing, loose in his walking, he shall find that he miscarries in all his enterprizes, is ensnared in all his enjoyments, baffled with every temptation, and discomposed at every affliction that meets him: and the reason of all this is, because our strength both to do and suffer comes from God; now God communicates his assistance to his Children in a way of communion with them; they ask, and they have; they seek, and find; knock, and the treasury of mercy is opened to them. Prayer is the Channel, in which the stream of divine grace, blessing, and comfort runs from God the Fountain into the Cistern of their hearts; dam up the channel, and the stream is stopt; if the Stomach doth not its office, all the Members want their nourishment; if the Trade fails in the Shop, there is but a poor house kept within.

Secondly, Watchfulness is of as great importance to prayer, as prayer is to all our other duties; no duty can be dispatcht well without prayer, nor prayer without watching; for it is not prayer, but prayer performed in a holy spiritual manner that is effectual; now this cannot be done when the Christian is off his Watch. Take the Christian a napping, with his Graces in a slumber, and he is no fitter to pray, than a man is to work that is asleep; whatever a man is doing, sleep when it comes, puts an end to it; sleep it is the great Leveller of the world, it makes all men alike; the strong man is as unable to defend himself from an enemy in his sleep, as the Child; the rich man asleep and the poor are alike, he enjoys his estate no more than if he had none. Thus the Christian, while his Graces are asleep, is even like another that hath no Grace (as to the present use of them, I mean) he'll pray as the carnal man doth, enjoy God no more in the duty than such an one would do. O how sad is this! and yet how prone are we to give way unto this drowsiness of spirit in prayer? it creeps insensibly upon the soul, as sleep doth upon the body, the heart

V heart is gone before the Christian is well aware. The more need therefore there is to watch against it.

Thirdly, Because Satan is so watchful against prayer, therefore it behoves the Christian to watch unto prayer: Where should the strongest Guard be set, but where the enemy maketh his fiercest assault? this is the Port he batters, and labours with all his might to beat the Christian from, well knowing the shot which gall him most come out of it. What he doth otherwise against the Christian, is on a design to hinder his prayers, 1 Pet. 3. 7. as an

enemy falls upon one part of the City, to draw their forces from another place, which he chiefly desires to gain. Indeed the soul never falls fully into his hands, till it throws up this duty, *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.* Sometimes the City is taken, and the enemy is forced back again by those in the Castle, which commands the City. Prayer is like such a Castle, sometimes the Christian hath nothing left him but a spirit of Prayer, and with this he beats back the Devil out of all his advantages, and wrings out of his hands his new gotten victories.

C H A P. XV.

Shews wherein the Christians duty of watching to Prayer lies.

THe second thing I promised was to shew, wherein the Christian is to express his watchfulness in reference to this duty of Prayer. Take it in these three particulars; *First*, He is to watch before prayer. *Secondly*, He is to watch in prayer. *Thirdly*, He is to watch after prayer.

S E C T. I.

First, He is to shew his watchfulness before prayer, and that, *First*, by watching for the fit season to pray in. We cannot be always on our knees, we may serve God all the day, but worship him we cannot; this is a duty that requires some set times for its exercises. Now it is our duty to watch for the season of prayer, as the Merchant watcheth for the Exchange hour, he orders his other occasions so, that by no means he may miss that. Thus the Christian should endeavour to dispose his occasions so, that his Devotions be not shut out, or crowded up into streights of time by his improvidence; no, nor interfere with other necessary duties. Many a fair Child is lost by an untimely birth, and good duty spoiled by being unseasonably performed.

Secondly, He is to keep a strict watch over himself in his whole course; *First*, by shunning all that may defile his Conscience, and so render him unfit for communion with God. Thus the *Priest* was to watch himself, that he toucht no unclean thing, God thereby signifying, that he will have them to be holy in their lives, that approach near to him in the duties of his worship. *Secondly*, By a holy care to observe and lay up the most remarkable passages of Gods providence to him, as also the frame and behaviour of his own heart to God, all along the interval between prayer and prayer; the want of this part of watchfulness is the cause, why we are so jejune and barren in the performance of this duty. It is no wonder that he should want matter for his prayer at night, and trifle in it with impertinencies, who did not treasure up what pass in the day betwixt God and him. Though

the Minister be not making his Sermon all the week, yet by observing in his other studies what may be useful for him in that work, he is furnish'd with many hints that help him when he goes about it; such an advantage the Christian will find for prayer, by laying up the remarkable instances of Gods providence to him, and of his carriage to God again under them; these will furnish him with necessary materials for the performance. The Bag is filling while the Kine are a feeding, or chewing the Cud, and accordingly yields more plenty when milk'd at night; truly thus it is here, that Christian must needs be most fruitful and plentiful in his Devotions, when he comes to pour out his heart to God in prayer, that hath been thus filling it all the day with meditations suitable and helpful to the duty. Would he praise God? he hath the preferuations, deliverances, and assistances which God hath given in to him at hand, in the common-place book of his memory, which another hath lost for want of writing them down in this Book of remembrance. Would he humbly confess the sins of the day? he presently recalls, In this company I forgot my self, and spake unadvisedly with my lips; in that enjoyment I observed my heart to be inordinate; this duty I omitted, that I was remiss and negligent in doing. Now what a wonderful help hath such a soul above another that walks at random, to get his soul into a melting mourning frame? the eye affects the heart, the presence of the object actuates the affection: the sight of an enemy stirs up anger, the sight of a dear friend excites love, and puts a man into a sudden ravishment, whom may be he should not have thought on if he had not seen him. How can they mourn for the sins of the day at night, who remember them no more than *Nabuchadnezzar* his dream? *Thirdly*, By the frequent exercise of ejaculatory prayer; he doth not watch to pray, that never thinks on God but when he is on his knees; for by this long discontinuing his acquaintance with God, he indisposeth himself for the more solemn addresses of his soul to God. Long fasting takes away the stomach, the Christian will find,

find, that the oftner he is refreshing his spirit with those little slips and short gusts of Heaven, the larger draught he will be able to take when he returns to his set meal of morning and evening prayer; for by the means of these, he will be secured from worldly affections which exceedingly deaden the heart, and also be seasoned and prepared for further communion with God; these short walks often taken, keep the soul in breath for a longer journey.

SECT. II.

He must watch in prayer. It is not enough to watch the child that he goes to School, but the Masters eye must watch him in School; to be idle at School is as bad as to truant from it. Thou dost well, Christian, to take care of thy self before prayer, and to see that the duty be not omitted; but wilt thou now leave it at the School-door? truly then all thy former care is to little purpose. *First*, Thou must watch thy outward man, and rouse that up from sleep and sloth; if the body be heavy-ey'd in prayer, the soul must needs be heavy-heel'd; the Pen drops out of the Writers hand when he falls asleep. *Watch and pray*, saith Christ to his Disciples, he knew they could not do that work nodding; and yet how many do we see at the very time of prayer in our Congregations so far from Watching (in this sense) that they invite sleep to come upon them by laying themselves in a lazy posture? Certainly friends, communion with God is worth keeping our eyes open; little do these drones think what contempt they cast upon God and his Ordinance. I wonder any can sleep at the worship of God, and not dream of Hell-fire in their sleep. But it is not enough to keep the eye awaked; if thou sufferest it to wander; *Keep back my eye* (saith David) *from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way*, Psal. 119. *Secondly*, Thou must watch thy soul in prayer. The soul is the man, and the soul in prayer is the very soul of prayer. Watch what its ends and aims are, that it shoots not beside the mark; watch what strength and force thy soul puts to the work: our prayers miscarry by shooting short as well as wide. In a word, Thou must keep thy heart with all diligence from one end of the duty to the other, or else it will give thee the slip before thou art aware. How oft alas, do our souls begin to speak with God in a prayer, and on a sudden fall a chatting with the world? one while our hearts are warm at the work, and we pursue hard after God with full cry of our affections, but instantly we are at a loss, and hunt cold again. Holy David was sensible of this, and therefore we have him in the midst of this duty begging help from God to call in his gadding heart, Psal. 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name.*

SECT. III.

The Christian is to watch after prayer, *first*, by calling his soul to a review concerning the duty,

how it was performed by him. God himself, when he had finished his works of creation, looks back upon them, *Gen. 1. 31. And God saw every thing that he had made; that is, he viewed his work, as an Artist would do a piece he hath drawn.* He hath given us all a faculty to reflect upon our actions, and looks we should use it, yea, complains of those that do not consider their ways and doings. Many duties depend upon this. He that looks not back how he prayed, can he be humbled for the sins that cleaved to it? and will God pardon what he takes no care to know, that he may shew his repentance for them? or will he mend those faults in the next prayer, which he found not out in the former? no, but rather encrease them. We need not water Weeds, let them but stand unplucked up, and they will grow alone. This is the sluggard, whose soul will soon run into a Wilderness, and be over-grown with those sins in prayer, which at last may choak the very spirit of supplication in him. *Secondly*, By observing what is the issue and success of his prayer; as he is to look back and see how he prayed, so forward to observe what return he finds of his prayer. To pray and not watch what becometh of our Prayer, is a great folly, and no little sin; like children that throw stones into a River, which they never look to see more. What is this but to take the name of God in vain, and play with an Ordinance that is holy and sacred? Yet thus, alas, do many knock at Gods door, (as idle children at ours) and then run away to the world (as they to their play) and think no more of their prayers; or like Pilate, who asked Christ, *What is truth?* and when he had said this, went out to the Jews, forgetting what he asked. Holy David did not think Prayer such an idle errand, *Psal. 5. 3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord: I will direct my prayer unto thee and look up.* *First*, He is careful to take his aim right in delivering this Arrow of prayer, which he sends with a message to Heaven, *I will direct my prayer to thee*; then he is as careful to observe where his Arrow lights, and what answer is made to it, *and I will look up*, which amounts to as much as that expression, *Psal. 85. I will hear what God the Lord will speak*, that is, to me, concerning the prayer which in those words immediately foregoing he had made, *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.* When the Merchant hath sent his Ship to Sea, he is enquiring at the Exchange after her, to hear how she got to her Port, whether on her return, and with what lading. When the Husbandman hath cast his seed into the ground, then he comes every day almost to see how it comes up. This, Christian, is to watch unto prayer, to wait for answers to prayer. Mordecai no doubt had put up many prayers for Esther, and therefore he waits at the Kings Gate, looking what answer God would in his providence give thereunto.

CHAP. XVI.

wherein the Christians watch is set for him about prayer, or counsel given how he may set it.

THe third thing I promised, was to help the Christian in setting of his watch, or to give some directions how he may keep his heart in a watchful frame, which take as they follow in these particulars.

S E C T. I.

✓ **F**irst, Harbour not any known sin in thy bosom. Sin hath two contrary effects on the conscience, and both sad enough; either it fills the conscience with horror, or benums and stupifies it; it breaks the souls rest, or takes away its sense; the latter is the more common. Suffer the Devil to anoint thy temples with this *Opium*, and thou art in danger to fall into the sleeping disease of a stupid conscience, little list then thou wilt have to pray. Or if it hath the other effect upon thee, thou wilt be as much afraid, as now thou dost little desire to pray.

Secondly, Beware of any excess in thy affections to the creature. A drunken man of all other is most unfitting to watch, such a one will be asleep as soon as he is set in his chair; now all inordinacy of affection is a spiritual drunkenness, Christ joins both together, *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares, Luk. 21. 34.* it is a preservative against drunkenness of spirit, that the day of the Lord might not take them napping; and of the two, the drunkenness of the affection is the worse: He that is bodily drunk over-night, is sober by the morning; but he that is overcharged with the cares or love of the world, rises as drunk as he lay down, and how can he then watch unto prayer? We have therefore these two often joined together, *1 Thes. 5. 6. Let us watch and be sober. 1 Pet. 4. 7. Be ye therefore sober and watch.* Whatever the affection is, the intemperance of it lays the soul under a distemper, and indisposeth it to prayer; is it sorrow? our Saviour finds his Disciples *sleeping for sorrow*, when they should have watched and prayed, *Luke 22. 45.* Is it love? this laid *Sampson* asleep in *Dalilah's* lap. The heart of man hath not room enough for God and the world too, worldly affections do not befriend spiritual, the heart which spends it self in mourning for worldly crosses, will find the stream runs low when he should weep for his sins; if the cares of this life fill his head and heart, he will have little list to wait on God for spiritual purposes. It is no wonder that the Master finds his servant asleep in the day when he should be at work for him, if he sate up revelling all the night.

S E C T. II.

Thirdly, Resist this spiritual drowsiness when it first creeps upon thee. Sleep is easier kept off when approaching, than shaken off when it hath got possession and bound the senses. This sleepy disease of the soul steals insensibly upon us, even as the night steps in by little and little; when therefore thou findest it coming, rouse up thy self; as a man who hath business to do, would start up from his chair to shake off his drowsiness. Now thou maist observe these few symptoms of this distemper invading thee; *First*, An unwillingness and backwardness to duty, if thou findest this, it appears thou beginnest to be heavy-eyed; when grace is wakeful, the Christian needs not many words to persuade him into Gods presence: *Thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart said, Thy face will I seek.* Therefore conclude thou maist, that some vapours have fumed up from thy corruptions, to dull and deaden thy heart to the work. He that would run to the door (when awake) at the first knock of his dear friend to let him in, may, when between sleeping and waking, let him stand too long; this was the *Sponser's* case, and lost her the company of her beloved, it shewed plainly she was in a sleepy distemper, in that she was so backward to duty, for that was the door Christ would have met her at. *Secondly*, Formality in prayer is a certain symptom that a sleepy distemper hangs about thee; grace awake is full of life and activity, at least it discovers it self by making the soul deeply sensible of its deadness and dulness. *Vigilantis est somnium narrare*, saith *Seneca*, it shews the man awake that tells his dream what he did in his sleep; and it proves the soul awake that can feelingly and mournfully confess his deadness. *Thirdly*, Prevalency of wandring thoughts. In sleep, fancy and imagination rules and ranges without any controul. If thy thoughts range and scatter into impertinencies in time of prayer, and meet with no check from thee, it shews thy grace, if thou hast any, is not well awake.

S E C T. III.

Fourthly, Express a conscientious diligence at thy particular calling in the intervals of prayer. They that sit up to watch had need of some work to keep them awake; idleness is but one remove from sleep. I cannot believe that he who lazeth a day away in idleness, should find his heart awake to pray at night, for he hath that day lived in the neglect of a duty as necessary as this; and it is bad going to one duty through the neglect of another.

There

There is a generation of men indeed, that under a pretence of watching and praying always, betake themselves to their Cloisters, and renounce all secular employments, as if it were as easie to put off the world as to change their Clothes, and get on a Cowl or a religious habit; but the world hath found those places commonly to have proved, not so much houses to pray in, as dens to draw their prey into; it is more like that those who are pamper'd with sloth and fulness of bread, should be earren up with luxury and sensuality, than with Zeal and Devotion: the air, when still, thickens and corrupts, the spirits in our body are choaked with rest, and the soul needs motion and exercise as much as either: in spiritual offices it cannot hold out without intermittings, therefore God hath provided our particular callings as a relief to our spiritual devotions, only our care must be not to overdo. The same thing may quicken and weaken, wake us, and lay us asleep. No greater help to our religious offices, than a faithful discharge of our particular calling; no greater Duller of the Spirit of prayer than the same, when inordinately pursued. The same Oil feeds the Lamp, and drowns it, if excessively poured on. Hold the Candle one way, and the Wax nourishes the flame; turn the other end up, it puts it out.

Fifthly, Preserve a sense of thy spiritual wants. As fulness inclines the body to sleep, so doth a conceit of spiritual fulness the soul; when the Belly is full, then the bones would be at rest, the man hath more mind to sleep than work; whereas he that is pinched with hunger, his empty craving stomach keeps him awake; if once thou beginnest to have a high opinion of thy self, and thy spiritual hunger be a little staid (from a conceit of thy present store, and sufficiency of thy Grace) truly then thou wilt compose thy self to sleep, and sing the rich mans Lullaby to thy soul, *Take thy ease, O my soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years: The Corinthians are a sad instance for this purpose, 1 Cor. 4. 8. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us, Paul is now no body with you, the time hath been you could not be without his pains, the hungry Child did no more cry for the Breast than you for the World preached by him; but now your stomach is staid, ye are full, and can live without him: whereas, God knows it was a fulness of wind of pride, not of solid grace. It is the nature of Grace to dilate the heart, and make room for more, but of pride to cloy and glut the soul. God hath long kept open house in England, the Wine-celler door of his Ordinances hath not been shut upon us, we have had free access to drink, and that abundantly, of their sweet wine. But alas! may it not be for a lamentation to see, how many are drunk with spiritual pride, rather than filled with grace, after so long an enjoyment of them? insomuch that some have attempted to stave the very vessels from which they have drawn this Wine; such are they that decry all Ordinances, and would down with Ministers and Ministry; yea, who can live without publick preaching and private praying also. Others not so mad-drunk as the former, yet are fallen asleep under the tap, they have lost their*

first life in, and love to Ordinances, they sit with sleepy eyes and dead hearts under them. Well, Christian, if thou wouldst keep thy soul awake for this or any other Ordinance, take heed thou losest not the sense of thy wants. Begging is the poor mans trade; when thou beginnest to conceit thy self rich, then thou wilt be in danger to give it over, or be remiss in it.

SECT. IV.

Sixthly, Retire often to muse on some soul-awaking meditations; we seldom sleep when we are thoughtful, especially if the thoughts we muse on be of weight and importance enough to intend and occupy the mind: Indeed, idle, trivial thoughts, such as have nothing to invite attention, are given as a ready means to bring a man asleep (I mean bodily sleep.) That Christian who neglects frequently to meditate on spiritual things, and lets his thoughts walk all day in the company of carnal worldly occasions, I should wonder if he finds his heart awake at night to pray in a spiritual manner. Give me therefore leave to present a few subjects for thy meditations to insist upon, and they will be as the brazen Ball, which some *Philosophers* used to hold in their hand that they might not sleep too long; or as the Alarm which men set over-night to call them up to their business early in the morning.

Meditate of Christs coming to judgment. Surely thou wilt not easily sleep while this Trumper, that shall call all mankind to judgment, shall sound in thy ear. The reason why men sleep so soundly in security, is, because they either do not believe this, or at least do not think of it seriously, so as to expect it. The servant that looks for his Master, will be loth to be found in bed when he comes; no, sits up to open the door for him when he knocks. Christ hath told us he will come, but not when, that we might never put off our cloaths, or put out the Candle; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come, Matth. 24. 42.* There are indeed negative signs concerning his coming to the general judgment of the world, by which we may know he will not yet come; as the fall of *Babylon*, the calling of the *Jews*, and other Prophecies, that must be fulfilled; before which he will not come: but no such, from which we can conclude that his coming to any of us in particular to take us away by death, and summon us to our particular judgment before his Bar, shall not yet be. Thou art young, thou canst not therefore say, thou shalt not dye as yet; alas, measure the coffins in the Church-yard, and thou wilt find some of thy length; young and old are within the reach of Deaths sithe; old men indeed they go to death, their Age calls for it; but young men cannot hinder deaths coming unto them. Thou art rich, will this excuse thee? Rich men indeed they can get others to serve in their Arms here, when their Prince calls them forth to war; but *there is no discharge in this War.* Solomon tells us, Thou must personally do this; thou art strong and lusty, thou canst not say, that death will be longer at work to fell thee down.

Some indeed he cuts down by Chips in Consumptive Diseases, they dye by piece-meals; others he tears up in one night, as a Tree by a Tempest: O think of this, and thy sleep will depart from thee.

Secondly, Consider the Devil is always awake; is it time for them in the City to sleep, when the Enemy without watch, and may be are climbing the Walls? Our Saviour takes it for granted, *If the good man of the house had known in what Watch the Thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up, Mat. 24. 44.* Of all the nights in the Year, he would not then have slept. Would *Saul* have slept in his Trench, if he had thought *David* had been so near? Or *Sisera* have lain down to rest, if he had seen the Hammer and Nail in *Jael's* hand to drive through his Temples? *Hannibal* is at the Gates, was enough to awake the whole City of *Rome*, and call them to their Arms; and is not *Diabolus ad Ostim*, the Devil is at thy door, enough to keep thee out of thy bed of sloth and negligence? what day in all the Year is no Term to Satan? what place or company art thou in, that he cannot make a snare to thy soul? what member of thy body, or faculty of thy soul, which is not in danger to be abused by him? hast thou not an inmate in thy own bosom that watcheth to open the gate to him? and is there not a constant correspondence between them? O how oft doth he beat us (as *Bernard* saith) with our own staff; and (as the Thief sometimes serves the Traveller) binds us with our own Garters? Shall we not always watch to pray, when he watcheth to tempt? Shall not we keep our Correspondence with God and Christ our Allies in Heaven, as he doth with our flesh that is his Confederate?

*Ut jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones;
Ut ipsum serves non expergisceris?*

Shall thy Enemy be awake to seek to cut thy Throat, and wilt not thou rise to save it?

Consider, wicked men they are awake, and hard at work for Satan and their lusts. The Philosopher blusht, that the Smith should be up, and have his Hammer in his hand, before he had his Book. O may it not put the Christian to shame!

Thirdly, Consider how watchful the men of the World are to follow their worldly business; Do they not rise early, and go to Bed late, grudging the very time that is spent to refresh Nature in the Night with sleep, so bent they are upon their carnal projects! The Philosopher observed this, and shamed himself for suffering the Smith to be at his Anvil in the morning, sooner than he was at his Book. O Christian should it not make thee blush much more, to see the whole Town up, and as busy as Bees about a Garden, one flying this way, another that way; and all to bring a little more of this Worlds perishing pelf into their Hive, out of which, death ere long will smoak them, and force them to leave what with so much pains they have gathered for others, they know not who, possibly their greatest Enemies; while thou Christian sleepest away thy precious time, though thou art

sure to carry thy gettings into the other World with thee, and there enjoy the fruit of thy short labour here with everlasting glory! Nay, consider how watchful the Wicked are to take all opportunities to pursue their works of darkness. The Adulterer watcheth for the twilight to meet his Minion, and wilt not thou watch unto prayer, that thou maist fill thy soul with spiritual loves in Communion with thy God? The Thief is up at midnight to get his prey; and wilt not thou break thy rest a little for to obtain a richer Treasure than is to be found in the Coffers of the richest Princes that the World boasts of? Shall these be at so much pains to satisfy their lusts, and thou take none to honour and enjoy thy God? O what a shame was it to the heavy-eyed Disciples, that they could not watch to pray with their Master, when Judas that bold Traytor was so wakeful, to be up in the dead of the Night to betray him into his Murderers hands?

Fourthly, Consider how short the time is that thou art desired to Watch: *Could ye not watch with me one hour* (saith Christ) *Matth. 26. 40.* Ere long Christian thou shalt be called off thy Guard, and then thou shalt have all rest, though no sleep; it is but for this short life thou art put to stand upon this hard duty; and is that so long? others do not count it so. O how soon is a day, a year, yea, a life past at play or sin? The great complaint that such make, is, time is short, they wish they could clip its wings, and take off the weights from this Clock, that make it pass away so fast: Is time so short and sweet to spend in sin? and can it be tedious to thee to bestow it in devotion? Why should an hour in the Closet be thought by a Saint long, when day and night spent in an Alehouse is too short for the sinner? But above all consider, whether it be not better to watch and pray here on Earth for a few days, than to wake and roar in Hell under endless and easeless torments.

Fifthly, Consider seriously how great a loser thou hast been already in thy heavenly Trade for want of watching; it is with the Christian, as with some negligent Merchant, who takes notice of some one loss, of a round Sum, that befalls him (may be some hundreds at a clap) at this he cries, he shall be undone; but regards not the pence and shillings that he idly spends, nor considers his loss which follows upon his daily negligence; here his Estate melts insensibly, and he is not aware of it; whereas would he count what in this dribbling way is lost by Retail, he might find it amounts to more than the other. Thus the Christian sometimes is troubled for one great sin into which he hath fallen (and that not without Reason) but withal, he observes not how he neglects this duty to day, and negligently performs that at another time; how he now prays coldly for want of due preparation; and what little fruit comes of another for want of watchfulness after it, whereby in time he falls low, though with an easie descent, step by step; whereas if he could bring the several Items of these his particular losses together, he would find them swell into a sad reckoning, except with these his losses, he hath also lost (which is the greatest) the

tenderneſs of his conſcience. Now Chriſtian haſt thou not a mind to thrive at laſt? and ſhall a careleſs Chriſtian add to his ſtock? Did you ever go by the ſluggards Field, and not find it overgrown with Thorns? Wouldſt thou but be perſwaded to make it thy buſineſs daily to watch thy heart, how thou prayeſt, and how thou walkeſt after thou haſt been at prayer, thou ſhouldeſt find a bleſſed change in thy ſpiritual affairs; this ſtrictneſs will at firſt be uneaſie, like a new Suit; but every day that will wear off, and a ſweet facility follow, when thou ſhalt ſee thy gains come trolling in by it; he that finds how well he is paid for his diligence, by the encrease of his Eſtate, will not grudge the Sluggard his eaſe, when he ſhall ſee him walk by his door in Rags: It was the ſaying once of a rich man, who by Gods bleſſing on his diligence had raiſed a vaſt Eſtate, that at his firſt ſetting up in the world, he got a little with much trouble; but afterwards, he got his great gains with little trouble. And thou Chriſtian wilt find the ſame in thy ſpiritual Trade; thy trouble will be moſt at firſt, but thy gains moſt at laſt; and the trouble leſs, becauſe the way of godlineſs by uſe and experience will be naturalized to thee, and conſequently become eaſie and delightful.

Sixthly, Conſider what others loſe by thy not watching; he that lives in a Town, wrongs his Neighbour as well as himſelf, by not looking to his Fence: Thus one Chriſtian may injure many, by not keeping his own watch. *Fiſt*, Thy very example is a wrong to others, for this ſleepy diſeaſe is catching, thy looſe Converſation may make others ſo. As one learns to yawn of another. It is no ſmall bleſſing to live among active Chriſtians, whoſe zeal and forwardneſs in the ways of God is exemplary; this puts metal in thoſe that follow them; the heavenly holy Converſation of a Maſter, is a help to

the whole Family, *Secondly*, Thou indiſpoſeſt thy ſelf for doing thy duty to them; we are commanded to watch over one another in love, as thoſe that are concerned in our Brethrens welfare. Now how unfit is he to watch over others, that doth not watch himſelf? to provoke others to love and to good works, who needs himſelf the ſpur? Can one aſleep awake another that is ſo?

Seventhly, and laſtly, Conſider Chriſts watchful care over thee; look upon him in his Providence; that eye which neither ſleeps by night, nor ſlumbers by day, is thy conſtant Keeper: Conſider him in his Interceſſion, there he prays for thee, watching thereunto with all Perſeverance; it is his Trade and buſineſs in Heaven; *For he lives to make Interceſſion for his Saints*: Conſider him in his Spirit; what is he, but Chriſts Meſſenger, ſent as our Guardian, to take care of the Saints in his abſence? In a word, conſider him in the Goſpel-Miniſtry, which is ſet up for this very purpoſe, to watch for your ſouls; yea, every private Saint hath a charge to be his Brother- Keeper; this well conſidered, would make thee *fiſt*, watchful to promote his glory, that ſo carefully provides for thy ſafety. What put *David* into ſuch a rage againſt *Nabal*, but the diſreſpect that his ſervants found at his hands, to whom he had been ſo ſerviceable: *In vain have I kept all that this fellow hath*. *Secondly*, It would make thee the more watchful over thy own ſoul; if thou haſt ſo much ingenuity as to fear grieving of thy God, who expreſſeth this tender care over thee; what greater grief can the indulgent Parent have, than to ſee his child not mind his own good, after all his care and coſt laid out upon him? He joyes to ſee the mony he gives him improved and encreaſed by his diligence; but it breaks his very heart with ſorrow, when it is all waſted and ſquandered away by ill Huſbandry.

CH A P. XVII.

With all Perseverance.

THeſe words [*with all Perſeverance*] contain the fifth Branch in the Apoſtles Direction for Prayer; which I ſhall diſpatch briefly in theſe four heads.

Fiſt, By giving the importance of this phraſe, *All Perſeverance*.

Secondly, By giving the Reaſon why we are to pray *with all Perſeverance*.

Thirdly, I ſhall caſt in ſome Conſiderations to move us to the Duty.

Fourthly, Wind up the Diſcourſe with a word of Counſel and Direction for the help of the weak Chriſtian therein.

SECT. I.

Fiſt, For the importance of the phraſe. Here

is perſeverance, yea, all perſeverance required in Prayer. *Fiſt*, Let us enquire what is meant by perſeverance. *Secondly*, What by all perſeverance. *Fiſt*, Here is required perſeverance. The word *ἀπορρησις* here uſed, comes from *καρὰς*, the ſame with *καρὰς* (a letter only tranſpoſed to melt the ſound) it ſignifies ſtrength and victory; hence its compound *ἀπορρησις*, is to proſecute any buſineſs with an unwearied conſtancy, till all difficulties be conquered, and the thing at laſt be accompliſht. It is uſed for the diligence and labour of hunting Dogs, that follow the Chafe, till at laſt they get the Game purſued; it is applied alſo to Lacquies, that with great labour run after their Maſters, and are at their hand in a Journey. In Scripture it is frequently applied to the duty of Prayer; as *Acts* 6. 4. *Col.* 4. 2. *Rom.* 12. 12.

And

And signifies that invincible patience, courage, and constancy which a Christian is to shew in upholding this duty of prayer.

Quest. But are *praying always* in the beginning of this Verse, and this *praying with perseverance* the same? if not, wherein lies the difference?

Ans. It cannot be thought, the *Apostle* being giving directions for Prayer, would let them interfere one with another, and in so short a space repeat the same Direction over again in other words; the rest are all distinct: so therefore will we take these. *Calvin* makes this to be the difference; by *praying always*, (saith he) he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as in adversity; and not then to intermit the practice of this duty, because not driven to it by such outward prelling necessities; but by praying with perseverance, *Admonet, ne defatigemur, instandum esse alacri animo; infracto studio continuandas esse preces, si non statim consequamur quod volumus.* He admonisheth, that we be not weary of the work; but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for. By *praying always*, we are exhorted to the daily constant exercise of the duty of prayer; not to neglect the seasons for prayers, as they return upon us. By *praying with perseverance*, we are pressed to bear up against Discouragements as to any particular suit or request we make at the Throne of Grace, and not to give over, though we have not a speedy answer to it; so that the former is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its stated seasons, and the latter to a fainting in our spirits, as to any particular suit we put up. We may keep our constant course of prayers, and yet not persevere in prayer, for this or that mercy which God withholds some time for the exercise of our grace.

Secondly, I must shew what is meant by all perseverance.

First, By all perseverance is meant such a perseverance as holds out to the end, till God doth give the thing we pray for, or takes away the subject of our prayer, as he did in *David's* case for his sick child by his death. It is possible a soul may continue long, yet at last faint, when it sees the time for answering still protracted, God still stays, and no news of his coming, after many a dispatch sent to Heaven upon that occasion. O 'tis hard to hold up our hands with *Moses*, to the going down of the Sun. *Christ* complains: how rare and scarce such a faith is to be found, when he bears long before he throws in the mercy prayed for: *Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith upon the earth?* *Luke* 18. 8. Shall he find so much Faith as to keep his People at Prayer in expectation of his coming to their relief?

Secondly, By all perseverance, is meant a perseverance of the whole man in Prayer; we must not only persevere to hold up the outward performance of the duty of prayer; but persevere to exert the inward powers of our souls, and their graces in the duty. The duty may be kept up, and the heart be down in performing it. The faith, zeal, and other graces of the soul may be gone, or act but feebly; like an Army, that hath not yet quitted the field; but their Powder and Shot are even all spent, there they stand, and set a good face on it, but can do

little or nothing to offend the Enemy, or defend themselves. Thus many in afflictions pray still, they have not yet given over the duty, and run out of the field; but alas their faith fails, and their heart quails, there is little life and vigour to be seen in the performance; here is some kind of perseverance, but not this all perseverance, which above all requires the perseverance of grace in its actings at the duty; So we translate the word, *Rom.* 12. 12. what is here with perseverance, is there continuing instant in Prayer, the word is *ἀεὶ καὶ ἰσχυρῶς*: Some are instant, but it lasts not; if they find the mercy comes, they draw hard; but if their Chariot of Prayer be set, and after a pull or two the mercy comes not, their faith jades, and they give over the work; others are constant, but not instant; they continue to pray, but pray themselves cold, they grow lifeless and listless in the work, as if they looked for nothing to come of it; we must joyn both together, or expect benefit from neither.

SECT. II.

Secondly, I proceed to the second thing promised; viz. to shew why we must pray with all perseverance, which take in these particulars. *First*, It is strictly commanded, *1 Thess.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing*; that is, without fainting; so our Saviour, *Luke* 18. 1. *He spake a Parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*: Mark, not only that they might, but ought. It is indeed a high privilege to us, and a low stoop in the high God, to give us leave thus to lye at his door, and to suffer the cry of our prayers to be ever founding in his Ears; we, I am sure, could not like to have Beggars knocking day and night at our doors: But so infinitely good is God, that he doth not only allow us this boldness; but also commands it, that the fear of a sin might move us, if the loss of a privilege will not. *Secondly*, This Perseverance in Prayer is highly commended: Indeed Perseverance crowns every Grace, and commends every Duty. It is not our faith and hope, but to hold fast our confidence, and the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end that God looks at, *Heb.* 3. 6. Not the seeming zeal and swiftness of our motion in the ways of God at our first start and setting forth; but the constancy of a well-breathed soul in holding on his course till the Race be finished, that *Christ* commends. *If ye continue in my words, then are ye my Disciples indeed*, *John* 8. 31. So in prayer, not the short spurts of an inconstant zeal, that begins to pray (as they say the French do to fight) like thunder and lightning; but if the first Charge carries it not, then they quail, and are quite cow'd in their spirits. No, it is not this soft metal, whose edge is thus easily turn'd, that God likes in Prayer, but a zeal tempered and hardned so with resolution, that makes it cut through all delays and difficulties; this God highly commends: It got *Jacob* the name of a Prince, so nobly he behaved himself in this Duty, holding it out till break of day with God, and then would not let him go, till he had blessed him. *Thirdly*, It is that which God intends by his delays, and seeming denials, why deals he thus with his people? Surely it is to put their graces to the trial, whether they will quit the siege for a few

few repulses, or fall on with more courage; he holds his peace, to make them cry the louder: steps aside, to make them more eagerly hunt after him. He lays Blocks before the wheel of their prayers, to try their metal how well they will draw, when it seems a dead pull, and the mercy comes not at their prayer. Now two things God aims at especially by his peoples perseverance in prayer. *First*, His own glory, *Secondly*, Their Advantage; these two are never severed. *First*, His own Glory: What fairer occasion can the Christian have in his whole life to honour God, than by holding fast his Integrity, and keeping his Allegiance to God firm, when he seems to be neglected, yea, forsaken of him? Certainly God would never have put Job to so much trouble, nor have made him pray and stay so long for the gracious issues of his Providence, but to glorify himself in the faith and patience of his faithful servant. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord*, saith the Apostle James, Chap. 5. Truly we could not have heard so much of his patience, if we had not heard so much of his troubles: had God put an end sooner to them, he might have had more ease, but not God more honour; this was it that God was pleased with, and counted himself highly honoured by, that Satan with all his wits and wiles, could not make Job give over praying, much less, fall on cursing God: No, not when God broke him with his tempest, and seemed not to regard him or his prayers. It pleaseth us most, when our prayers make the shortest Voyage; when they are at Heaven, and back again with an answer quickly; but it glorifies God most, when he lays an Embargo (as I may so say) upon our prayers, that no Answer come from Heaven to us, and yet we will send more after them, as Jacob did Benjamin after his other Son, who was then Prisoner in Egypt: When the poor soul will not be taken off the duty by any intervening discouragements, but presseth harder upon God from his seeming denials; this is indeed to give glory to God. *Blessed is he that hath not seen, and yet thus believes.* *Secondly*, God by his peoples persevering long in Prayer, before he gives in his gracious Answer, intends them no small advantage. *First*, He usually pays them use for their forbearance; the longer they pray, the more redundant the mercy is when it comes. Such a mercy that comes as an Answer of persevering prayer, is compared to the Husbandmans gains at Harvest, which abundantly recompenceth his whole years patience. *In due season we shall reap, if we faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. The Breast is filling for the child, while the Mother is sleeping; God sometimes seems to sleep and forget his poor children that cry to him, but he is preparing the fuller mercy for them. *Secondly*, Such mercies as are got with the longest and greatest difficulties, they come with sweetest manifestations of Divine Love. *O woman great is thy faith!* Matth. 15. This poor woman had not her request so soon granted as some others, but she lost nothing by it; for with the recovery of her Child (which was all her Errand) she carries away with her a high testimony from Christs own mouth to the truth and eminency of

her grace; she who was at first called a Dog, is at last owned for a dear Child. *Thirdly*, Such mercies as are the issues of persevering prayers, they are received usually with more joy and thankfulness than others; partly, because the Christians desires are more intense and sharp, by long staying and earnest praying for them; and so tastes more sweetness in the mercy, as he that comes hungry from a long journey at Plow, relisheth his food better than another, that hath not whetted his appetite with any labour or exercise. And also, because such mercies give disappointment to the Christians many fears which their long stay occasioned; when God is long a coming, we are prone to question whether he will come at last or no. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Psal. 77. See how many sad thoughts gathered about this good mans heart; which, though they did not overthrow his Chariot of Prayer, yet clogged his Wheels, and made him drive with an heavy heart. Now for a mercy to break out of so dark a Cloud, it must needs bring such a glory with it, as to ravish the soul with joy, and enlarge it into thankfulness. Those Judgements amaze and dispirit sinners most, which come after long Peace and Prosperity, when they think the danger is over, and bitterness of death is even past: As in Hamans Case, who was sent to the Gallows after he had vaunted how he was invited to the Queens Banquet; this strange turn of his Affairs made it a double death to him. So mercies that surprize the Saint after he hath prayed long, and can hear no tidings that they are on their way, O how it affects his heart with joy and gratitude! The Church had prayed *Without ceasing* for Peter in Prison, but still he is there, even to the very time when Herod would have brought him forth (probably to his execution.) Now when he came himself to bring them the joyful news their prayers were heard (while they were instant at the work) it is said they were *astonished*, Acts 12. 16. *Fourthly*, They are usually more holily used and improved; for God holds his people long at prayer for a mercy, many times, for this very end, to prepare and season their hearts; that when they have it, they may know the better how to imploy it for his glory, and their own good. None are more careful to husband a great Estate, than those who are at most pains to get it. Hannah prayed long for a Son, but none is given; this makes her add a Vow to her prayer; *If thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and wilt give thine handmaid a Man-child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.* 1 Sam. 1. 11. Happy was it for this good woman, she had not her desire sooner; if she had received him at first, haply she had never given him back to God again. The Lord sometimes forbears to give a mercy to us, only to get us deeper into bonds, to lay it out for him when we have it. 5. The last advantage that comes to the Christian by Perseverance in Prayer is, when the mercy is at last denied, and it is this; it will enable and dispose him to bear the denial more meekly and holily than another. He that is short-spirited,

and

and cannot wait on God for a mercy, will not easily submit to him in a denial; whereas he that keeps up a spirit of prayer for it, when God comes to take away the Subject of his prayer, will acquiesce now he sees God hath fully declared his Will in the thing. *David* and *Job* are pregnant instances for this; *Job* lets not a day pass without prayer for his children, and how does the man behave himself when they are slain? Doth he fret and fume? Doth he curse God for making them a Sacrifice, for whom he had offered so many sacrifices? No, he meekly submits to his holy Will, he opens not his mouth against him, but in praises to him: So *David*, when his Child was dead, (for whom while living, he ceased not passionately to pray) to shew how well satisfied he was with Divine Providence; he washeth his blubber'd Cheeks, puts off his mourning Apparel, and goes to the house of God to worship, 2 Sam. 12. 20. Prayer is a great heart-easer; it breaths out those distemper'd passions, which being bound up in others, break out, when God at any time crosseth them in their wills.

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, Having shew'd why we are to persevere in Prayer, I come now in the third place to press the Duty home. Christ bestow'd a Parable on his Disciples, for this very end, to shew that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; surely then it deserves an Exhortation. Now to enforce the Exhortation, take these five particulars into your consideration.

First, The prevalence of Perseverance in Prayer; this is emphatically exprest by that question of our Saviour in his Parable upon this subject, Luke 18. *Shall not God avenge his own Elect; that cry night and day unto him, though he bear long with them?* As if he had said, Can you think that God will send away those who are so near and dear to him, his own Elect with a denial; and that when he hath made full proof of their Faith and Patience, in waiting long upon him for an answer? I tell you (saith Christ) that he will avenge them speedily. Men seek to please their old customers that are constant to their shop, whoever else they send away; so will God those that are in constant Trading with him at the Throne of Grace. *They that wait upon the Lord, shall not be ashamed.* *David* is careful for our encouragement to let us know how well he sped after his long waiting at Gods door, Psal. 40. 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry: Hebrew, in waiting I waited; that is, I staid waiting long, and at last he came: But David was a Favourite, may others look to speed as he did? see vers. 3. Many shall see it, and trust in him.* Answer of Prayers is a Covenant privilege; it is not a Monopoly given to one or two, but a Charter granted to the whole Corporation of Saints to the end of the World, Psal. 102. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.* Now mark what follows, *This shall be writ for the Generation to come,* vers. 18.

Secondly, Thy persevering in Prayer will help to evidence thy state to be gracious. The Hypocrite is oft uncased here; *Will he pray always?* Job 34. Many will come into a workmans shop, and take up his Tools to work with them for a while, and lay them down again by and by, who would never yield to be bound to his Trade, and serve out an Apprentiship at it. Thus an unsound heart will be meddling with this duty now and then, but grows weary of the work at last, especially if he be made to wait long for an Answer. *Saul* prays to God, and because he hears not from him, goes at last to seek to the Devil; observe what effect Gods silence, frowns, and seeming denials produce in thy heart, and thou maist know the temper of thy spirit thereby. Do they wear off thy edge to prayer or sharpen it? Do they make thee fall off, and send thee away from Gods door (as some sturdy Beggars go from ours, when denied an alms) with clamours in thy mouth, and discontent in thy heart, resolved to beg no more there? Or do they make thee fall on with more courage, and enkindle thy affections to God and this duty more ardently; as the Suitor, whose love is heightened by repulses, and importunity doubled by being obstructed and opposed? Truly if thou findest the latter, thou maist conclude, if this instant constancy in Prayer be for spiritual blessings (Christ and his sanctifying graces) that Divine virtue, and that good store, hath gone from Christ into thy soul. *O woman, great is thy faith!*

Thirdly, Consider the great folly of fainting in Prayer; thou dost a foolish and irrational Act. Haply thou art in a deserted condition, prayest for comfort but none comes; for victory over such a temptation without, or corruption within, but art toyed in both; for all thy praying therefore thou first faintest in the duty, and then givest it over: What egregious folly is this? Because Mercy comes not in all haste to thee, therefore thou wilt run from it, which thou dost in ceasing to pray. When the Fisher misseth his Draught, he doth not presently give over his Trade, but falls a mending his Net. O cease not to pray, but mend thy praying; see at what hole the Fish went out, the mercy was lost; double thy diligence, and all shall be well at last; if thy pain continues while the plaister is on, dost think it will cease when it is taken off? whatever the Mercy is thou wouldst have, must it not come from Gods hands? Now, will God give the mercy to thee, who rejectest his Counsel for the obtaining of it? Is not Prayer, and that with all perseverance, the way he directs all his People to take? Suppose a Physician who is sent for to a sick Patient, should give the Messenger an Electuary to carry with him, and saith it will be some time, before I come my self to the sick man, but charge him to take a good quantity of this, as oft as he finds himself ill every day till I come, and he shall do well. Now the Patient begins to follow his Physicians directions, but staying longer than he likes before he comes, and finding his trouble continue, sets it away, and takes no more of it. The Physician at last sets forth, and as he is on his way to him, hears of it, turns back, and comes

not

not at him ; so the poor man dies by his own hasty folly. Truly, this is our case, God for Reason best known to himself, stays some while before he comes to his tempted distressed servants for their deliverance ; but leaves order when any of them ail any thing (so the word *κακομαρτίαι*, James 5. 13. signifies) that they should pray, apply themselves to the use of this duty ; yea, continue the spiritual constant use of it till he comes ; and withal assures us, he will come soon enough to save us. Now what folly is it to cast off this means so strictly prescribed ? Surely though there were nothing else, this is enough to turn Gods back, when on his way of mercy to do us good.

Fourthly, Consider it is as sinful as foolish to give over this duty. *Thou castest off fear, and restrainest Prayer before God*, Job. 15. 4. It is a high crime for one trusted with a Castle for his Prince, to deliver it cowardly into his Enemies hand, especially, if he hath provision wherewithal to defend it. Now hath not God provided sufficiently to enable the Christian to maintain this duty against all the Armies of Men and Devils, Afflictions and Temptations that can oppose it ? Princes are most careful to enforce and supply Frontier Castles above others with all necessities for defence, because most assaulted. Prayer is a duty that is as hard laid at by Satan as any, and hath many other difficulties that render it no easie matter for the Christian to be instant and constant at it. God hath considered this, and accordingly hath provided succour. He gives his Spirit to help the Christian (because of his many infirmities) what, and how to pray ; who if he be used kindly, will not be wanting to lift with him in the work ; and while the Spirit is ready to pray in him, Christ is as ready in Heaven to pray for him ; who also sends the precious promises of the Gospel (as Messengers into a besieged Town) to assure the soul, relief is coming from Heaven to him, be the affliction or temptation never so great and formidable that begets it. Now to faint in the work, and by giving over the duty, to open the City-Gates of his soul, for Satan to enter and triumph over God with his insulting blasphemies, O what gracious soul that hath any spark of loyalty in his breast unquenched to his God, doth not tremble at the thought of such a treasonable Action ! We cannot cast off Prayer, but we cast some dishonourable reflection upon God ; for as one saith well, Every real defect in the Creature proceeds from an imaginary defect which he falsely supposeth to be in God. Men first conceive unworthily of God, and then carry themselves unworthily and undutifully to him. Now the causes from which this fainting in Prayer proceeds, are all evil and bitter, as by and by will appear.

Fifthly, And lastly, As it is foolish and evil, so it is of dangerous consequence to our selves to faint, and cease to pray. First, It is the ready way to bring some stinging affliction upon us ; this is the best that can come of it. Art thou a servant of God, and fliest from his face ? expect a storm to bring thee back to thy work. Art thou a Child, and playest the Truant ? look that thy heavenly Father will send thee to School with a Rod at thy

back. Secondly, Cease to pray, and thou wilt begin to sin. Prayer is not only a means to prevail for mercy, but also to prevent sin. *Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* The Thief comes when the Candles are out, and all the house in their Beds : Christ could not keep his Disciples awake at their Devotions ; and how soon were they put to the Rout when the Tempter came ? when the Courtier in a discontent withdraws, and gives over his attendance at Court, he is more easily wound in to disloyal practices against his Prince. Discontent softens the heart to receive sinful impressions from the Tempter. *Thou castest off fear, and restrainest Prayer before the Lord*, Job 15. 4. Eliphaz his Doctrine was true, though his Application was false ; when Saul gave over in a Pet to pray to God, then he sought to a Witch. Sins of Commission are the usual punishments that God inflicts on persons for sins of Omision ; he that leaves a duty, may fear to be left to commit a crime ; he that turns his ear from the Truth, takes the ready course to be given over to believe Fables, 2 Tim. 4. 4. He that casteth off Prayer, 'tis a wonder if you find him not ere long cast into some foul sin.

S E C T. IV.

The fourth and last thing propounded, was a word of Counsel for the Christians help and direction in this difficult work of Perseverance in Prayer. Now this will, I suppose, be best performed by laying before you the several causes of a persons falling off from this duty, or fainting in it, and so to fit the directions accordingly ; all Diseases are not cured with the same medicine ; neither are Catholick remedies so effectual, as those which respect the particular humour from which the distemper ariseth. Now the Causes of non-persevering in Prayer, are diverse.

First, Sometimes the Cause is want of a lasting and enduring motive or principle to keep and hold us constantly to the duty : When the Spring is down, the Watch must needs cease going ; for that fails that gave the Wheels their motions. That sometimes which sets the Creature to Prayer, is not pure obedience to the Command, but a desire to some particular mercy, which if obtain'd, the Fish being caught, the Net is laid aside ; or if he prays long, and hath it not, he grows weary of the work, and lets it fall : Be sure Christian therefore to pray in obedience ; bind the duty upon thy conscience, and thou wilt not easily shake it off. *God forbid (saith Samuel) I should sin in ceasing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. He had little encouragement from them he prayed for to continue at the work, but his obedience to God to whom he prayed held him to it. This is a strong fence to hedge in the heart indeed ; we cannot break through this Hedge, but we shall feel the Thorns in our side. A gracious soul dreads nothing more than guilt : Tell him it is a sin to cease praying, and you say enough : What though God answers not my prayer, his silence to my prayer must not make me silent not to pray. Prayer is still a duty ; God is not bound to answer presently when we pray, but we are bound to pray, though

though he doth not answer. *All this is come upon us* (saith the Church) *yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have dealt falsely in thy Covenant*, Plal. 44. 17. Remember, Christian, thou art a Covenant-servant, and one thing thou art as such bound to do, is to pray to thy God without ceasing, 1 Thes. 5. This will defend thee against any motion that the Tempter suggests to the contrary. The Beggar knocks a while at the rich mans Door, and if he be not served, away he goes: But the servant in the house, though he be hungry, doth not run away presently from his Master, because he hath not his Dinner so soon as he desires.

Secondly, Sometimes this not persevering in Prayer comes from Pride. *This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. 33. What a haughty spirit was here! Pride likes not to wait, but to be waited on. He in the Gospel was ashamed to beg, much more to stand long at the door upon a begging errand. Now, though this be a disease which a Saint is more free from than other men; yet there are dregs enough still within him to royle and dis Temper his spirit, if he be not daily evacuating and purging them out; it will not therefore be amiss to leave a few soul-humbling Considerations in your hands, which you may be often taking, especially when you feel any grudgings of this sin about you, and your hearts begin to grow discontented, that God makes you stay so long for any mercy prayed for.

First, Consider what it is to pray; it is to go a begging for an Alms, not to demand a Debt: Now doth it become thee in so poor a condition, and about such a work, to be so quick and short with thy God? If you can live without being beholden to God, why then do you at all come to his door? If you cannot, why then do you not wait more patiently for his pleasure? Should he wrong thee if he beat thee from door? Why then art thou no more thankful for his leave to wait there, though thou beest not presently served?

Secondly, Consider who he is thou prayest to: Is he not the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth? And is not this one piece of the State he looks to be served in by his poor Creatures? How long did *Mordecai* sit at the Kings Gate, before he had what he waited for? Is it not time enough for the Servant to be set at Dinner, after he hath waited at his Masters Table? Were it not unsufferable sauciness in the servant to complain his Masters fate too long, and required too much waiting at his hands? This is the language of our hearts, when we think much to stay Gods time for a mercy. Is he not a righteous holy God? surely he doth thee no wrong to make thee pray, and that long, for a mercy which thou deservest not when it comes at last. Is he not wiser than thou, to know how to time his mercies? *Shall the Earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the Rock be removed out of its place?* Job 18. 4. Wilt thou have God overthrow the course of his providence, which he thinks fit, to gratifie thy impatient spirit? surely this is to charge God foolishly with some Errour in his Government. In a word, Is not he a faithful God, though he comes not so soon to thy relief as thou

wouldst have him? Where did he give thee leave to date his Promises, and set the day of payment? No, he hath promised to answer his Childrens Prayers, but concealed the time of performance of his promise, on purpose to keep them in a waiting posture; and therefore he breaks not his promise when he detains a mercy, but thou forgettest thy duty not to wait. God is not unfaithful, but thou art faithless and unbelieving.

Thirdly, Have not as good as thy self prayed, and that as long as thou, before they have received an Answer; and yet have not thus behaved themselves? Look into the Generation of Seekers, and thou wilt find that God hath exercised their patience as well as thine. Hast thou stood at Gods door longer than many of thy Brethren have done? Remember *Job*, *David* and *Heman*, how many troubles came over their heads, what sad tidings they did hear! Dismal Afflictions did they endure before the day broke, and Divine Providence cleared up! Shall God raise a Causeway for thee to walk by thy self dry-shod, while these, and thousands besides, have taken many a weary step through the deep sloughs of Affliction, before they could come to a fair way? When God led *Israel* far about, and made it a journey of forty years from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, it had been great pride for any among them to have desired God to lead him a shorter way thither than all his Brethren. *David* desired no more at Gods hands, than to fare as his Fellow-Saints did, *Psal.* 119. 132. *Be merciful unto me as thou usest to do unto those that love thy Name.* Nay, doth not Christ himself, an example beyond all example, wait, and that long, even in Heaven it self, for an answer to his Prayers? He hath been already above a thousand years there at Prayer for his Church, and against his enemies, and hath not as yet received the full of his desires; but still is expecting till the one be saved, and the other made his foot-stool. Who art thou that thou shouldst have so high an opinion of thy self, as to look God should make all stay, and trade for Time, while thou alone for ready money?

Fourthly, Consider whether thou didst never make God wait on thee before his Suit could be heard, though he begg'd not for his benefit, but thy own. Did God wait in thy carnal state upon thee, that he might at last be gracious to thee, and thinkest thou much to wait at prayer now on him?

Thirdly, This not persevering in prayer, proceeds oft from unbelief. The Creature prays, God is silent, and no answer comes: Now, thinks Satan, is my time come to do this person a mischief; and therefore he labours to perswade the Creature, that there is no mercy to be expected from God. If, saith the Tempter, God had meant to come, he would have been here before now. So many days and months are now gone, and no news of his approach; thou hast stayed too long to meet with disappointment at last, give over, and take some other course. Thus he dealt with our Saviour; no enemy appear'd in the Field for forty days, and then he appears. This is his way with the Saints also; he lets them alone while he thinks they are softened into a compliance, by long standing upon duty,

duty, and hopes their Ammunition grows low, then he comes to parly with them, and takes them off from waiting upon God, by starting many fears and doubts in their thoughts, concerning the Power, Mercy and Truth of God; so that the poor Christian is at last put to a stand, and knows not whether he should pray, or not pray; or if he holds up the duty, yet not his heart in it; he prays faintly, and with a kind of despair, as the poor widow that made ready her last handful of Meal with no other thoughts, than of dying when she had eat it. Thus he prays, but lobs upon nothing but death and misery to follow it. O this is sad praying, to expect no good from God in the performance. Unbelief is a soul-enslaving sin; it is to Prayer, as the Moth to the Cloth, which bites the very Threds asunder, and crumbles it to nothing; it wastes the souls strength, that it cannot look up to God with any hope, Nehem. 6. 9. * *They made us afraid, saying, their hands will be weakened.* Resist therefore Satan stedfast in the Faith; never let thy heart suffer the Power, Mercy or Truth of God to be called into question; thou hadst as good question whether he can cease to be God. These Attributes of the Divine Nature, are to thy Faith, like the stone to Moses, which Aaron and Hur put under him to sit upon; they will sustain thy spirit that thou shalt not faint, or grow weary at the work, though God makes thee wait till the going down of the Sun. O this waiting posture highly pleaseth God, and never puts the soul to shame. Mary, that stayed by the Sepulchre, though she mist her Lord there, got at last a happy sight of him. *Quaramus & nos Christum* (faith one upon the place) *ex fide, & asstabit nobis licet non illico eum agnoverimus.* Let us but seek Christ in faith, and he will at last be with us, though we do not presently see him.

Fourthly, Some persevere not in prayer, because they have their eye upon some other than God, from whom they expect help; it is no wonder he gives over praying, who thinks he hath another string to his Bow. While the carnal heart prays for deliverance, he hath other projects in his head how to wriggle himself out of the Briars in which he is caught; and on these he lays more stress and

weight than on God to whom he prays; therefore at last he leaves praying, to betake himself to them; whereas another that looks for all from God, and sees no way to help himself; but by calling in God to his aid, will say as Peter to Christ (asking his Disciples whether they would leave him as others had done) *Lord, whither shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life? I know not another door to knock at* (faith the poor soul) but thine; the Creature hath it not to give, but thou hast: I will therefore never leave thee; we know not what to do (said good Jehoshaphat) but our eyes are up unto thee.

Fifthly, It proceeds from a want of inward complacency which the Creature should have in God, and communion with him Job 27. 10. *Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he alwayes call upon God?* He will not alwayes call upon him, because he never did cordially delight in him. We easily let go what we take no great content to enjoy; the sincere soul is tyed to God by the heart-strings, his communion is founded in love; and love is stronger than death, many waters cannot quench it. A stranger may have an Errand that brings him to a mans house, but that done, his acquaintance ceaseth; but a Friend he comes to sit with him, and the delight he takes in his company, will not suffer him to discontinue his acquaintance long: Get therefore thy affections but once placed upon God as thy chief good, and the spark or stone will as soon forget the way to their Center, as thou the way to thy God in prayer. The Hypocrite useth Prayer, as we use Physick, not because he loves the taste of it; the sincere soul as food, it is sweet to his gust. David, from the inward satisfaction he found in the presence of God, cries out, *Psal. 73. 28. It is good for me to draw near to God*; as one that tasting some rich Wine, or sweet Morfel, lays his hand on his Stomach (where he finds the chearing of it) and saith to the standers by, O it is good; never will such a soul part with it; no, he'll say as the Fig tree in *Jothams* Parable, Shall I forsake my sweetness, and the good fruit that I have found in communion with my God? I will never do it.

CHAP. XVIII.

Speaketh of the publick Spirit which should breath in our Prayers for others, with a Lamentation for the want of it, and an Exhortation to it.

Vers. 18. And Supplication for all Saints.

THESE words contain the sixth and last Branch in the Apostles Directory for Prayer, and that is the comprehensiveness of the Duty, or the persons that are to be the Subject of our prayers, *Supplication for all Saints.*

But what? would he have us pray for none but the Saints? this cannot be the *Apostles* meaning, it being so contrary to the mind of Christ, from whom he hath his message; Christ both bids us pray for our Enemies, and is himself our pattern for it; yea *Paul* himself teacheth contrary Doctrine to this: 1 Tim. 2. 1. *I exhort that prayers and supplication be made for all men*; that is, all sorts of men, Faithful and Infidels, Friends and Enemies; so then Saints are not here named as the Adequate and only Subject of our prayers; but as a principal species, a sort of persons, whom we are in an especial manner to carry in our prayers to God, whom if we do but remember, we shall not easily forget to pray for others also; because, as *Augustine* saith, *Numerus sanctorum de numero impiorum semper est auctus*: The Saints number is increased and taken out of the number of the wicked. In praying for *Babylon*, we pray for *Jerusalem*; the more that are pray'd out of sin, the more are pray'd into Christ: We shall wind up our Discourse upon this Subject upon these three bottoms.

First, We must shew a publick spirit in prayer, by praying for others as well as our selves.

Secondly, Of all whom we remember in our prayers, Saints must not be forgot.

Thirdly, In praying for Saints, we must be careful to comprehend and incircle all Saints.

S E C T. I.

First, of the first, The Christian ought to have a publick spirit in prayer; this is a duty of common interest, in which others are to share with our selves, like the Buckets that hang in our Houses, which are for the use of the whole Town, when any House is on fire. The Spirit of prayer is a publick Treasure, though laid up in some few hands; all cannot pray, therefore all should be prayed for: I say, it is the Saints duty, not a favour upon courtesie, which may *ad libitum*, be done, or left undone; we sin and transgress the Law of prayer, if we do it not; God forbid, saith *Samuel*, *That I should sin in ceasing to pray for you*, 1 Sam. 12. *Paul* writes himself a Debtor to his Brethren in this respect, *We are bound to thank God alwayes for you*, 2 Thes. 1. 3. He

acknowledges it due debt; in another place, *He thanks God that he hath them in remembrance alwayes*; so sensible he was of the weight of this duty, that he thanks God for giving of him a heart to perform it.

First, It is one end why the Spirit of prayer is given us; the gifts of the Spirit are to be employed according to the mind and intent of the Donor. If a man bequeaths House and Land to another, but charges the Estate with such a payment for the use of the poor; he forfeits his Legacy, that fulfills not the will of the dead. God intends the good of others in all his gifts to particular Saints; the way to lose our gift, is to hoard it up, and not lay it out for the end it was given. *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with*, 1 Cor. 12. 7. How should we profit others by this gift of the Spirit, if not by praying for them? That Spirit which stirs us up to pray for our selves, will, if we quench it not, send us on the same Errand for others; yea, in some cases, for others before our selves; for their spiritual good, before our own temporal; for the publick good of a Community, before the private good of our single person; as in *Moses* his case, who would not be taken off praying for *Israel*, to be made great upon their ruines; indeed that offer from God, *Let me alone, and I will make of thee a great Nation*, was only probatory to try whether *Moses* would prefer his own stake before that peoples; and God was highly pleased with his self-denial.

Secondly, The Law of love binds it as a duty upon us; we are commanded to *love our Neighbour as our self*; that [*as*] imports a parity for kind, though not for proportion; for manner, though not for measure; I must love my Neighbour as truly, though not as strongly as my self. Now how do we shew real love to our selves, if we pray not for our selves? Our Saviour expounds our love to our Enemy, by praying for him. *Matth. 5. 44. Love your Enemies, and pray for them which despitefully use you.* We may give an Alms to an Enemy, and not love him; 'tis easier to draw out our purse, than to draw out our soul to the hungry, as the Prophet phraseth it, in prayer we draw out our souls. If a man ever speaks or does any thing sincerely, surely it is when he directs his speech to God in prayer, saith *Lucas Brugens.* upon the place; therefore God chuseth this of praying for our Enemies, as the surest Testimony for our loving of them; and truly he that wisheth well only to himself, may be well

well reckoned among the most degenerate of mankind; one well compares such a self-lover to the Hedges-hog, that laps himself within his own soft Doune, and turns out Bristles to all the World besides.

Use. This shews the largeness of Gods bountiful heart; he gives his Children not only leave to ask for themselves, but for others; this is not the manner of men; we count it too much boldness to beg for themselves, and others also. If a poor man, when he hath got his Alms, should then beg for all his Neighbours, where should he find the man that would bid him welcome? but behold here the immensity of Divine goodness, who gives us leave to bring our Neighbours Pitcher with our own to his door; yea, commands it, and takes it ill when we steal to prayer upon our own private Errand, and leave the thought of others Necessities behind us; Why shouldst thou, Christian, stand in doubt, whether God will supply thy own wants, when he commands thee to intercede for others?

SECT. II.

Secondly, A Lamentation may be taken up for the narrowness of our spirits in prayer; some indeed are so far from praying for others, that they have not learnt to shew so much mercy to themselves; yea, live in such an estate of Alienation from God, wherein they cannot pray for themselves, or their dearest Relations. O how many prayerless Fathers have we that are cruel to their own flesh? Husbands to the Wives of their own bosom? Ask whether they love them, they will tell you, yes, that they do, as their own souls; and you may believe them; for they serve them no worse than they do their own souls: A time is coming, wherein they will know, one hearty prayer found upon the File for their Relations, would speak more for their love they pretend towards them, than all the Bags of money which they fill for them: Others, if they shew a little natural affection to their own flesh, and Domestick Relations, yet their love hath much ado to get over their own Thresholds, to enquire how it fares with others. O how little do they feel their Neighbours pains? How seldom do they spread them with any real sense upon their hearts before the Lord? Or if their eye affects their heart with what is presented so near unto them in the afflictions of their next-door Neighbour; yet how few discover such a publick spirit, as to carry upon their hearts the miseries of those that are at further distance, so as to be faithful Remembrancers to the Lord for them? Blessed Paul was affected with, yea, had a great conflict for those that had never seen his face in the flesh; even among those that are Christians, O what a decay is there of this publick spirit! There is great complaint in the world among men of their great losses in our late times of confusion; but I think the Saints are the greatest losers, who have lost so much of their Love and Charity; one faith, the world was once destroyed with water, *propter ardorem cupidinis*, for the heat of lust which had set it on flame; and shall be once again destroyed with fire, *propter teporem charitatis*,

for the coldness of Love and Charity; Love is to the soul, what natural heat is to the body, it gives vigor, and enables for the performance of all Offices of life; but alas, how is this kindly heat decay'd among Christians in this old Age of the World? This was long ago foretold by our Saviour, Mat. 24. *The love of many shall wax cold*; and no wonder, when self-love, that predatory fire, waxes so hot; foretold also by the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3. 2. *In the last days men shall be lovers of themselves*; and what a black Regiment follows this Captain, Sin, is there to be seen; if once a man make Self the top of his aim, farewell loving of, or praying for others: Charity cannot dwell in so narrow a house as the self-lovers heart is; yea, it is Diametrically oppos'd to it, *Love seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. But to turn Lamentation into Exhortation, labour for a publick spirit in prayer; is there none, O man, that needs the mercy of God besides thy self? Wouldst thou have none saved in another World, nor provided for in this World with thee? Now in remembering others, God will give thee leave thy love should begin at home, though he would not have it end there; look into thy Family, canst thou forget them a day, if thou remembrest thy self? Shall a Believer turn worse than an Infidel? He provides for his house, and thou hast light that tells thee, all thy providing for them is nothing, except God say Amen: When thou hast paid thy duty to them, still widen thy Charity, and take up thy Neighbours into thy thoughts. O consider what is doing in the Streets and Neighbourhood: How many maist thou there soon find, pouring out their precious souls as a drink-offering to Satan, the God of this World, in their horrid abominations? O pray that God would stay their bloody hand, before they have irrecoverably made away themselves; then take a further walk in thy meditations to view the publick state and posture of the Nation; see what mercies are writ with the golden Pen of Providence upon its forehead, and pay thy humble thanks; what Prognosticks of Judgements coming thou canst observe in the face of the times, and get into the gap before the wrath begins. Did Abraham so plead for a Sodom, though himself was far enough from the danger of the storm? and not thou for thy own Nation, who art like to be taken in it, if it falls in thy days, or thy posterity to rue it, if the Cloud impending be not scattered by the prayers of the faithful? Nay, let not the Sea that divides thee, and the other parts of the Earth make thee think thou art not concern'd in their happiness or misery. Let thy prayers walk over the vast Ocean, and bring matter for thy Devotions, like the Merchants ship, her fraught from afar: Visit the Churches of Christ abroad; yea, the poor Indians, and other ruins of Mankind, that lie where Adams sin threw them with us, without any attempt made as yet upon them by the Gospel for their recovery, and carry their deplored condition before the Lord. Our Drake is Famous for compassing the Earth with his Ship in a few years: Thou maist by thy prayers every day, and make a more gainful Voyage of it too than he did.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Take two or three quickning Considerations to set thee the more feelingly to this work.

First, Thou canst not pray in faith for thy self, if only for thy self: The Lord Jesus taught his Disciples this piece of Charity in the Form of Prayer he gave them; *When ye pray, say, Our Father: Pater est verbum fidei; Noster, est verbum charitatis: Father, is a word of Faith and Confidence: Our Father, imports Love and Charity; two necessary Graces in Prayer. We live by Faith, and Faith works by Love; no prayer can be without faith, nor faith without charity. Christ sends him in the Gospel from the Altar, to reconcile himself to his Brother, before he offered his Gift, and why? but that he might be as ready and willing to pray for his Brother, as himself? If we have not Charity to pray for our Brother, we cannot expect welcome when we pray for our selves.*

Secondly, You do not else make good the character and good report which God gives of his Children; he speaks of them to be a blessing to the persons and places round about them, *Isa. 19. 2. Israel a blessing in the Land of Assyria: They are compared to a Fountain, which is a common benefit to serve a whole Town; to stop or trouble which, is a wrong to all that draw their water thence, Prov. 25. 26. Now one way wherein the godly are eminently serviceable to others, is by the interest they have in God, and the prevalency of their prayers with him; By the blessing of the upright the City is exalted, Prov. 11. 11. That is, by their fervent prayers, which draw down a blessing from Heaven upon it; God bleseth Imperatorie, by Command, Psal. 133. 3. He commanded the blessing, even life for evermore: The Saints bless when they pray, Numb. 6. 23. On this wise shall ye bless the people, saying unto them, the Lord bless thee and keep thee.*

Thirdly, God gives a signal Testimony of his favour to his Saints prayers for others.

1. He doth great things at their request for others; how oft did *Moses* reverse divine plagues that were executed on *Egypt*, even as oft as *Pharaoh* had a heart to beg his prayers? How low did *Abraham* beat the Market for *Sodom's* preservation? He brought it down to ten righteous men, could that wicked place but have afforded that number, it had not been turned to ashes.

2. When their prayers obtain not a mercy for a people, then nothing else can help them; therefore God to express his peremptory Resolution, and irreversible Decree to punish *Israel*, tells them, *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be to this people, Jer. 15. 1.* Thereby intimating their case desperate; if the prayers of such holy men could not prevent the fall of that Cloud of his wrath impending, much less should they with their own power and policy shift it off: indeed when God is fully set upon a vindictive way, he takes them off from praying, *Jer. 7. 16. Pray not thou for this people, for I will not hear thee; and even in this he shews at what a rate he values his*

peoples prayers, which makes him loth they should bestow their pains in vain. *Pray not thou for this people; as if he had said, let them pray if they will, I can without any regret reject their motion; *but I am unwilling thou shouldst pray in an unaccepted time, for that which I have no mind to give.*

3. When the Saints prayers bring not back with them the mercy for others that is their express Errand, yet God is careful that his people should not have the least suspicion that the denial proceeds from any disrespect he hath to their persons or prayers; and therefore he sometimes gives the thing they desire, only he changes the Subject. Thus, what God denied *Abraham* for *Ishmael*, he gave him abundantly in *Isaac*; sometimes again, what he denies them for others, he grants to themselves; thus *David's* prayer for his Enemies, *return'd into his own bosom.*

SECT. IV.

Now in praying for others: *First*, Get thy heart deeply affected with their state and condition for whom thou prayest; God loves mercy better than sacrifice: To draw out our souls in giving an alms, is greater Charity than to draw out our Purse; so in prayer, be sure thy soul be poured out, or else thou art a deceiver, thou wrongest both God and him also thou prayest for; before Christ pray'd for *Lazarus*, he troubled himself: *Behold how he loved him* (said those about him, who were witnesses to the groans he fetched, and tears he shed:) Then thou wilt pray fervently for others, when thy heart is warm'd into sympathy with them. A Lawyer may shew more Rhetorick in pleading a mans cause, but a Brother or dear Friend that carries the sense of his condition upon their hearts, must needs discover more affection.

Secondly, Prefer spiritual blessings in thy prayers for others before temporal: Is it a sick Friend on whose Errand thou goest? If health be all thou beggest for him, thou art not faithful to thy Friend, he may have that, and be the worse for it; ask a Christ, Grace and Glory for him, and then thou dost something to purpose; surely this our Saviour meant in his method of curing the Palsy man, *Mat. 9. 2. to be cur'd of his disease; Be of good cheer (saith Christ) thy sins are forgiven: He first brings him the News of a pardon, as a mercy infinitely more worth than Life or Limbs, thereby tacitely reproving his Friends, who took more care to have his body healed, than his soul saved. Is it the Nation thou art praying for? Aim at more than deliverance from outward Judgements and Plagues. The carnal Jews could say, Give us water that we may drink, Exod. 17. 2. but thought not of their sin, to beg repentance for, and pardon of it; that was the cry of the Creature; a Beast can low and bellow in a Drought, but this is the voice of a Saint.*

Thirdly, Be not discouraged in your prayers for others, though an answer doth not presently overtake them; thou pray'st for a rebellious Child, or carnal Friend, who yet continue to be so; take heed thou dost not presently think them past Grace, and

and give over the work. Samuel saw the people he prayed for, mend but slowly, yet hear what he saith, 1 Sam. 12. *God forbid I should cease praying for you.* I have heard of some that have been laid forth, yea buried, before they were dead, by their over-hasty friends. Be not thou thus cruel to the souls of thy Relations or Neighbours, lay them not out of thy prayers, bury them not in thy thoughts for Reprobates, because thou canst not perceive any sign of spiritual life in them, though thou hast many a time stretched thy hands in prayer over them; their souls thou seest are yet

in their bodies, and so long it is not too late for God to breath the life of grace into their souls. Again, Is it for the publick thou prayest? draw not in thy stock of prayer, though thou hast not so quick a return in thy Trade with Heaven for it as thou desirest. The Fathers labour is not lost, if his Son receives the benefit of it; he may be dies before the Ship comes home he sent forth, but his child lives to have the gains of that adventure paid into his purse. Thus one generation sows prayers for the Church, and another reaps the mercy prayed for.

CHAP. XIX.

sheweth, in praying for others, the Saints are principally to be remembered, and why.

The second Proposition follows.

SECT. I.

IN praying for others, we are in an especial manner to remember Saints. The Apostle hints this, by making them the instance for all, as the *species famosa*, or chief rank of men for whom we are to pray; and it suits well with Pauls Doctrine elsewhere, Gal. 6. 10. we are there bid as we have opportunity, to do good to all, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Now this of prayer, I take to be one of the most eminent ways of doing them good; what greater kindness can a man do for his sick friend, than to go to the Physician for him? By other acts of charity, we give a little out of our own Purse; but by praying for the poor Saints, we open Gods Treasury for them. If one should meet a Beggar, and out of his purse throw him a few pence; but another tells him, I have no money of mine own to give, yet I will go to Court, and open your necessitous condition to the King my Master; it were easie to tell which of these does the poor man the greatest kindness; a poor Saint may thus do more for another, though (as Peter told the Cripple) he hath neither Silver nor Gold to give, than he who hath the largest purse of his own; that of Araunah is observable, 2 Sam. 24. 22. where we have his bountiful offer to King David, *Let my Lord the King take, and offer up what seems good unto him, here be Oxen for burnt sacrifice*; this was much, and shewed his heart to be noble and large, as it follows, ver. 23. *All these things did Araunah as a King, give unto the King*; yet one thing he did that amounted to more than all this, which was his hearty prayer to God for Davids acceptance, and Araunah said unto the King, *The Lord thy God accept thee*; he might have done all the other for fear. A Subject sometimes gives his Prince, because he knows he may take, though he gives it not; but by his praying for him, he discovered his hearty affection to him.

There are several weighty Reasons for this Duty. *First*, from God. *Secondly*, from Satan. *Thirdly*, from the Saints prayed for: And *Fourthly*, from the Saints praying. *First*, from God. 1. They are the special object of his love; his heart is set upon them, his thoughts and providence are at work continually for them; others indeed do partake of divine bounty, but they may thank the Saints company and neighbourhood for it; when the Gardner waters his beds of flowers, some runs down into the Allies, but had he no flowers there, he would save that pains; when once God hath got his whole Family of Saints home to himself in Heaven, it will quickly be seen what God will do with the rest of the world; God dispenseth the same providence to them both, but not with the same affection, nor to the same end: *He is the Saviour of all, but especially of those that believe*, 1 Tim. 4. 3. He saves the Saints with saving purposes; the wicked he saves temporally, to destroy them eternally; he saves them from a present sickness or danger, that they may ripen for Hell; as we save our young wood for greater growth, and then cut it down for the fire. Now what shall be done for those to whom God declares so much love? we cannot do less than pray for them: by this we comply with God, and shew our content in his choice. 2. God hath made them the proper heirs of all his promises: now promises are the ground of prayer: we are to pray for others, though wicked, not knowing, but God may have a secret purpose of doing them good: but where there is grace, *hic se aperit decretum*, here God breaks open his Decree: the Fountain of his electing grace which ran hitherto under-ground, now bursts forth, so that now you may with fuller confidence pray for such a one. When Paul begs prayers, to encourage his friends

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at the work for him, he assures them of his sincerity, *Heb. 13. 18. Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly.* As if he had said, you pray for one that God will not chide you for mentioning: 'tis an encouragement for a Merchant to adventure, when he puts his stock into a good Bottom. 3. They are a Generation that alone honour God in the world: indeed God honours himself upon others in their present lusts and future damnation: he makes their wrath praise him here, and his wrath poured on them shall praise him hereafter; but no thanks to them for all this, for they do their utmost to lay the honour of God in the Dirt: But the Saints are a people, who are not merely passive, but active in the praising of God, 'tis their Mother-language to bless the Name of God; whatever is their work, this is their end and aim: *Whether they eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God.* Now upon this account we are to pray for Saints above others; the first thing our Saviour teacheth us to pray for, is, that the Name of God be hallowed, in order to which he directs us in the very next words, to pray for his Church and Saints, as those who alone can hallow it; *Thy Kingdom come.*

S E C T. II.

Secondly, From Satan; his great spight is against the Saints: God owns them, therefore he hates them, and spits Fire and Brimstone at them: where God is of one side, you may be sure to find the Devil on the other: indeed they are the only company that stand in his way: As for the wicked he takes himself to be advanced, when they are exalted in the world: the Father is honoured, when the child is preferred; but the Saints rising, portends his fall; this makes him bend all his force by temptation or persecution to procure their ruine, these are the Stars he would stamp under his feet; the first Murder in the World was of a Saint, and Cain will kill Abel to the end of the World: in all broyls and confusions of Nations, these are the threatned party, therefore they need our prayers most.

Thirdly, From the Saints prayed for. 1. They exceedingly desire prayers; the wicked I confess may do this also, but 'tis by fits, in a pang of fear or fright; thus Pharaoh sends in all haste for Moses, when the Plagues of God are in his House and Fields. The carnal Jews pray Samuel to pray for them that they die not; but it was, when terrified with dreadful thunder and rain that fell 1 Sam. 7. yea, Simon Magus himself smitten with horror at Peters words, begs his prayers, *that none of those things which he had spoken, might come upon him*; but at another time these wretches cared neither for the Saints, nor for their prayers. Pharaoh, who desired Moses at one time to pray for him, at another time chafes him out of his presence, with a charge never to come at him more; but now the Saints they are very covetous, yea, ambitious, of the auxiliary prayers of their Brethren, and those not the meanest among them neither; indeed as any is more eminent in grace, so more greedy of his

Brethren help; the richer the Tradesman is, the more he sets at work for him. Paul himself, *Rom. 15. 30.* is not ashamed to beg this boon of the meanest Saint. *Now I beseech you Brethren, for the Lord Jesus his sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* Did you ever hear a Beggar at your door, or Prisoner at the grate beg more passionately? *for the Lord Jesus sake, for the Spirits sake*; if ever you felt any warmth in your hearts from the blood of Christ, or love of the Spirit comforting of you, *strive, συζωήσατε*, wrestle with me, till we together have got the victory, prevailed with God for this mercy. 2. As the Saints are covetous of prayers, so they lot upon it that you do pray for them; yea, take up comfort before-hand, from the expectation of what they shall receive by them. *I know this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers, Phil. 1. 19. I trust that through your prayers I shall be given to you, Phil. 2. 28.* Where first observe Pauls modesty, he sinks and drowns his own prayers, and expresseth his faith on theirs. Secondly, his confidence; he doubts not but they will pray, neither does he question the happy return of them into his bosom; as if he had said, if ye be faithful, ye will pray for me; so that we break our trust, and disappoint our Brethren, if we forget them. Thirdly, Saints are the honestest Debtors we can deal with, they will pay you in your own coyn; he that shews any kindness to a Saint, is sure to have God for his Pay-master; for its their way to turn over their debts to God, and engage him to discharge their score to man. Onesiphorus had been a kind friend to Paul, and what does Paul for him? to prayer he goes, and desires God to pay his debts. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.*

S E C T. III.

Fourthly, From the Saints praying; there is no duty God commands, but he pays the Christian well for the performance, and leaves him a loser that neglects it; there is enough in this duty we are speaking to, that may make it lovely and desirable in our eye; the best of Saints have counted it a great privilege to be admitted into this Noble Order. Paul thanks God that without ceasing he had Timothy in remembrance day and night in his prayers: But wherein lies this mercy to have a heart to pray for our Brethren?

First, It is a singular mercy to be instrumental to the grace or comfort of any Saint, much more to be instrumental for the glorifying of God; this a gracious heart prizeth highly, though it costs him dear to promote it: Now in praying, though but for one single Saint, thou dost both: 2 Cor. 1. 11. *You helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us, by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.* Paul begging prayers, inforceth his request with a double Argument. 1. From the prevalency of joint-prayers; when twenty pull at a Rope, the strength and force of every one is influential to the drawing of it; so in prayer, where many concur, all help; God

God looks at every ones faith and fervency exerted in the duty, and directs the answer to all. 2. From the harmony of joint-praises; the fuller the Confort in praises, the sweeter the Musick in Gods ear; joynt-prayers produce social praises; he that concurs to a prayer, and not in returning praise, is like one that helps his friend into debt, but takes no care to bring him out.

Secondly, By praying for others, we increase our own joy; when Paul saw the prayers which he had fown for the *Thessalonian Saints*, 1 *Thes.* 1. come up in their faith and zeal, he is transported with joy, as an incomparable mercy bestowed upon himself: 1 *Thes.* 3. 9. *What thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?* He had watered them with his prayers, God gives increment to their grace; from this his joy flourisheth, and his heart is so ravished, that he knows not what thanks to God are enough for the mercy he receives through their hands; truly the reason why we gain no more

from the graces of our Brethren, is, because we venture no more prayers upon them.

Thirdly, This would be an undoubted evidence to prove our selves Saints, could we but heartily pray for them that are such: Love to the Brethren, is oft given as a Character of a true Saint. Now no act whereby we express our love to Saints, stands more clear from scruples of insincerity, than this of praying for them. Will you say you love the Saints, because you frequent their company, shew kindness to their persons, stand up in their defence against those that reproach them; or because you can suffer with them? All this is excellent, if sincere; yet how easie is it for vain-glory, or some other carnal end, to mingle with these? But if thou canst find thy heart in secret (where none of these temptations have such an advantage to corrupt thee) let out to God for them with a deep sense and feeling of their sins, wants and sorrows, this will speak more for the sincerity of thy love, than all the former without this.

CHAP. XX.

The Application of the Point.

Use. **M**ust we pray above all for Saints? woe then to those, who instead of praying for them, had rather with those, *Ila.* 59. 15. *make a prey of them*; that instead of praying for them, can curse them, and drink to their confusion; happily 'tis not under the plain name of Saints, but as wrapt up in the Bear-skin of Fanatick, Puritan, or some other name of scorn, invented to cover their malice, so they can devour and tear them in pieces; the Saints are a sort of people that none love, but those that are themselves such; it is a good gloss of *Jerom*, *Estote sancti, ut oratis pro sanctis*; be Saints, and then you will pray for Saints; the Righteous is an abomination to the Wicked, 'tis a Sect every where spoken against; the feud began at the first between *Abel* and *Cain*, and so spread over the whole world; one Generation takes up the Cudgels against them, as another layes them down. *Anilcar* bequeathed his hatred against the *Romans* to his Son *Hannibal* when he dyed; so is the feud transmitted by the Wicked from one Generation to another against the Saints; nothing can quench their wrath, or take up the quarrel; no moral perfections (which were they in others, would be thought lovely) let the Saint be never so wise, meek, affable, and bountiful, yet this, that he is a Christian, is a *but*, that will blot all in the wicked Worlds thoughts, *Bonus vir, Cajus Sejus, sed malus tantum quod Christianus*, was the language in *Tertullians* Age; *Cajus Sejus* had been a good man, if he had not had that without which he could not be good; no near relation can wear off their spight: *Michal* cannot bite in her scornful spirit, but jears her husband to his face

for his zeal before the Lord; in a word, no benefit which accrues to the wicked by the Saints Neighbourhood (and that is not a little) can make them lay down their hatred; they are the only Bail which God takes to keep a Nation (when under his Arrest) out of Prison; they are the cause of blessings to the Families, Towns and Kingdoms they live in, yet the Butt at which their invenom'd Arrows are levell'd against: the whole City is against *Lor*, not a man among them to take his part, so true and constant are the wicked to their own side. *Tertullian* tells us of some Heathen husbands that liked their Wives, though loose and wanton, and lived with them (when such) before they were converted to Christianity; but when once they had embraced the Faith, and thereby were made chaste, they put them away: Fathers that could bear undutiful rebellious carriages in their children, when once converted, and these amended, they turned them out of doors; *Ut quisque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit*, as any were reformed in their lives by turning Christian, so he became an Offendor. It were well, if this were only the Heathens sin, but by woful experience we find that the true Christian hath not more cruel enemies in the whole World, than some be that are of his own Name. The sharpest persecutions of the Church have been by those that were in the Church: O what a dreadful account will such have to make in the great day, who profess the Name of Christ, yet hate his Nature in the Saints! who call Christ Lord, yet persecute his best Servants, and destroy his loyallest Subjects; these are the men that above all other shall feel the utmost of the Lords fiery wrath in the

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day when he shall plead his Peoples cause, and avenge himself on their Adversaries.

Use 2. Be exhorted to this duty of praying for Saints; you cannot do that which God will take more kindly at your hands. He himself puts this Petition into our mouths: *Ask me of things to come concerning my Sons*, Isa. 45. 11. Courtiers frame their Petitions according to their Princes liking; they are careful not to ask that which he is unwilling to give; but when they perceive he favours a person or business, then they are ambitious to present the Petition. *Joab* knew what he did in sending the woman of *Tecoa* to *David*, with a Petition wrapt up in a handsome Parable for *Absalom* the Kings son; he knew the Kings heart went strongly after him, and so the motion could not but be acceptable; and is not the Lords heart gone after his Saints? thy Prayer for them therefore must needs come in good time, when it shall find the heart of God set upon the very thing thou askest; this was it that God was so pleased with in *Daniel*, chap. 9. 22, 23. Now in your Prayers for the Saints, among other things that you pray for them, forget not these.

First, Pray for their lives; they are such a blessing where they live, that they seldom fall, but the Earth shakes under them; it is commonly a Prognostick of an approaching evil, when God takes them away by death. *Jeroboam* had but one Son, in whom some good was found; he must dye, and then the ruine of his Fathers Family follows, 1 Kings 14. 7. When *Augustine* dyed, then *Hippo* falls into the enemies hands; if the wise man be gone that preserved the City, no wonder if its end hastens; God makes way to let his Judgements in upon the world, by taking the Saints out of the world; when God chambers his Children in the Grave, a storm is at hand, Isa. 26. It is you see of concernment to do our utmost to keep them among us, especially when their number is so few and thin already, that we may say, as once the Prophet concerning Israel, *We are as when they have gathered the Summer-fruits, or the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage*, Micah 7. 1. Did we indeed see them come up as thick in our young ones, as they fall in the old, we might say, a blessing is in them; these would be as Hope-seeds at least for the next Generation; but when a wide breach is made, and few to step into it, this is ominous: At *Moses* his death *Joshuah* stood up in his place, and it went well with Israels Affairs; but when *Joshuah* died, and a Generation rose up that had not seen the wonders God had done for his people, and so rebell'd, then went they to wrack apace, Judges 2. 9, 10.

Secondly, For their liberty and tranquillity, Psal. 122. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* Jerusalem was the place for their publick Worship; thither the Tribes went up unto the testimony of Israel, and to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord, verl. 4. so that by praying for Jerusalems peace, is meant, such serene times where in the people of God might enjoy his pure Worship without disturbance; the Church hath alwayes had her vicissitudes, sometimes fair, and sometimes foul weather; but her Winter commonly longer than

her Summer; yea, at the same time that the Sun of peace brings day to one part of it, another is wrapt up in a night of persecution: Universal peace over all the Churches is a great rarity; and where it is in any part of it enjoyed, some unkind cloud or other soon interposeth; the Churches peace therefore is set out by *an half hours silence*, Rev. 8. 1. When God gave the poor *Jews* a reviving after a tedious Captivity, by moving *Cyrus* to grant them liberty to go and rebuild the House of God, how soon did a storm rise, and beat them from their work? One Prince furthers them, another obstructs the work. The Gospel-Church, Acts 9. had a sweet breathing time of peace; but how long did it last? this short Calm went before a sudden Hurricane of Persecution that falls upon them, chap. 12. Thus have the politick Rulers of the World used the Saints, as their carnal interest seemed to require, one while to countenance, another while to suppress them; no sort of people in the world can expect less favour from the world, than the Church; their only safety therefore lyes to engage God to espouse their cause.

Thirdly, Pray for their love and unity among themselves; the Persecutors Sword (blessed be God) is not at the Churches throat among us; but are not Christians at Daggers drawing amongst themselves? The question in our days hath oft been askt, Why the Word preach'd (being as frequent, clear, and powerful, as any former Age ever enjoyed in this Nation) hath been no more effectual to convert the wicked, or to edifie the Saints. I will not say this is the sole Reason, but I dare deliver it as none of the least Causes, and that is the woful Divisions and Rents amongst those that have made greatest profession of the Truth. 1. For the Saints, it is no wonder they should thrive no more under the Word; for the body of Christ is edified in love, Eph. 4. So long as there is a Feavor upon the body, it cannot nourish. The Apostles themselves, when wrangling, got little good by Christs Sermon, or the Sacrament it self administered by Christ unto them; one would have thought that was such a Meal, in the strength whereof (as so many *Elijahs*) they might have gone a long journey; but alas we see how weak they rise from it; one denies his Master, and the rest in a fright forsake him; so unfit were they in such a temper to make a spiritual advantage of the best of means. Again, for the wicked, tis no wonder that the Word prevails no more on them, the divisions and scandals that have arisen among those that call themselves Saints, have filled their hearts with prejudice against the holy Truths and wayes of God; Christ prays for his peoples unity, *That the World may believe* (saith he) *that thou hast sent me*, John 17. 21. What is oftner in the mouths of many Prophane wretches, than this? we will believe them, when they are all of one mind; and come over to them, when they can agree among themselves; who loves to put his head into an house on fire? This should methinks stir up all that wish well to the Gospel, to pray, and that instantly, for the reunion of their divided hearts; hot disputes will not do it; Prayer, or nothing can. *Pliny* saith of

of the Pearls called *Uniones*, that their nature (though they be ingendred in the Sea) partakes of the Heavens, more than the Earth ; the God of Peace can only set us at peace ; if ever we be wise to agree, we must borrow our wisdom from above ; this alone is pure and peaceable.

CHAP. XXI.

Sheweth, that not some, but all Saints are the Subject of our Prayers and intercession ; and why.

The third Proposition.

IN praying for Saints, you must pray for all ; I do not mean as the *Papists*, for quick and dead ; Prayer is a means to wait upon them in their way ; at death, then they are at their journeys end ; prayers are bootless for the dead sinner, and need- less for the deceased Saint ; the wicked in that estate are beneath, the Saint above our prayers, we cannot help the wicked, the Tree is fallen, and so it must lye. We read of a change the body shall have after death ; vile bodies may, but filthy souls cannot after death be made glorious ; if they go off the body filthy, so they shall meet it at the Resurre- ction : the time to pray for them, is now while they live among you, or never ; for Death and Hell come together to the sinner. No sooner *Di- ves* his wretched soul is forced out of his body, but you hear it shriek in Hell, Luk. 16. 22. *The rich man dyed, and was buried ; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment ; but Abraham tells him, there is a gulf fixed, that forbids all intercourse be- twixt Heaven and him.* Now what is that, but an irrevocable Decree with which the wicked are sealed under everlasting wrath ; if God receive no prayers from them, then not from others for them : And as the wicked are beyond our help, so the Saints above all need of our help, for they are in their Port and Haven : Prayer implies want, but Saints departed are perfect, called therefore *the spirits of just men made perfect* ; we need not beg a pardon for them, for the Lord acquits them, they are just ; not for a supply of any good they want, they are made perfect ; not to remove any pain they feel, for the Spirit saith, *Blessed are they that dye in the Lord, they rest from their labours* ; but they who invented this Device, intended, it is like, gain to their own Purse, rather than benefit to the others souls ; 'tis a pick-purse Doctrine, contrived to bring Grift to the *Popes* Mill ; but to leave this, they are the living Saints, *your Companions here in tribulation*, that are the Subject of your prayers, and of these we are to incircle the whole community with- in our remembrance : the *Papists* speak much of a Treasury the Church hath, this indeed is the true Treasury of the Church, the common stock of pray- ers with which they all trade to Heaven for one ano- ther ; *Paul* tells us what a large heart he had, even for those whose face he never saw in the flesh,

Col. 1. 2. Take a few Reasons for the Point.

First, We are to love all Saints, therefore to pray for all ; Love in a Saint, is the picture of Gods love to us ; and Gods love looks not asquint to one Saint, more than another : that Image is not of Gods drawing, which is not like himself ; Nature may err in its productions, but not God in the Grace he begets in his Saints bosom ; the new Creature never wants its true nature ; if God loves all his Children, then wilt thou all thy Brethren, or not one of them : when *Paul* commends Christi- ans for this Grace of Love, he doth it from this Note of Universality, Ephes. 1. 15. *After I heard of your Faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the Saints*, so Col. 1. 4. *Philemon* vers. 5. Now if we love all, we cannot but pray for all ; to say we love one, and not pray for him, is a Solecism : Can a Courtier love his Friend, and not speak to his Prince for him, when he may do him a favour by it ? Love prompts a man to do that wherein he may expresse the greatest kindness to his Friend ; *Mary* pours the most precious oyntment she hath upon Christ. Prayer, if of the right composition, is the most precious oyntment thou canst bestow on the Saints ; save it not for some few of them that are of thy private society, or particular acquaint- ance, but let the sweet odour of it fill the whole house of the Church ; pray for all.

Secondly, We are to pray for all Saints, because Christ prays for all ; he carries all their names in his Breast-plate : *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word* ; he leaves not one of the number out of his remembrance ; the elder Brother was Priest to the whole Family, so is Christ our elder Brother to the whole Household of Believers : Now Christs Intercession is a pattern for our prayers, we cannot indeed pray for all, as he doth ; he prays for them not only in the lump, but for every individual Saint by name ; *I have prayed (Peter) for thee*, Luke 22. yea, not only for every person by name, but for their particular wants and occasions : *I have prayed that thy faith fail not*. Christ takes no- tice of that very Grace, which was in most eminent danger, and secures it by his intercession. O what unspeakable comfort is this to a Saint, that he in particular should be spoken of in Heaven, and every

want or temptation he laboureth with, taken notice of, and provided for by Christ his mediation! Thus indeed we cannot pray for all, because we know but few of their persons, and little of the state and condition of those we know; neither is there need we should: our general suffrage and vote is as kindly taken, as if we could descend to particular instances; God knows the mind of the Spirit in our prayers on earth to be for the same things which Christ insisteth on in his Intercession in Heaven.

Thirdly, We must pray for all Saints, or else we can pray for none. 1. We cannot pray really for any, if not for all; he that prays for one Saint, and desires not good to another, prays not for that one as a Saint; but under some other consideration, as Wife, Friend, Child, or the like (a Saint clothed with such and such circumstances) for *a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*; he that loves a man, because a man, loves all, because the same humane nature is found in all, and all Saints have the same nature. 2. We cannot pray acceptably for one, except for all; and so we wrong those for

whom we do pray, by leaving them out for whom we also should. *Joseph* would not hear the *Patriarchs* for *Simeons* release, till they brought *Benjamin* over to him also; if thou wouldst be welcome to God in praying for any, carry all thy Brethren to him in thy Devotions, leave none behind. *Are here all thy Children*, said *Samuel* to *Jesse*? he would not sit down, till the Stripling *David* was fetch'd to compleat the company. May be thou art earnest in prayer for thy near-neighbour Christians, but dost thou not forget others that are further off? Thou remembrest the Church of God at home, but dost thou lay the miseries of the Churches abroad to heart? What if God should ask thee now, *Are here all thy Brethren*? Are there none but these that live under thy eye to be remembred? Have not I Children, and you Brethren elsewhere in the World to be thought upon? The *Jews* in *Babylon* were not to forget *Jerusalem*, because of the great distance. Remember the Lord afar off, and let *Jerusalem* come into your mind, Jer. 51. 50.

CHAP. XXII.

The Application of the Point.

Use 1. **O** What a rich Merchant is the Saint, who hath a stock going in so many hands! in Heaven Christ is hard at prayer for him, on Earth his Brethren; what can this man want? Christ hath such interest in his Fathers heart, that he can deny him nothing; the Saints such interest in Christs, that he will not deny them; so the Christians Trade goes smoothly on in both Worlds. Think of this, Christian, for thy comfort, wherever a Child of God is living upon Earth, there hast thou a Factor to traffick with Heaven for thy good; let this help thy Faith in putting up thy own private prayers, knowing that thou prayest in a communion and fellowship with others, even when thou art alone in thy Closet, expect an answer to more than thy own prayer; 'tis uncharitableness not to pray for others, and pride, not to expect a benefit from the prayers of others.

Secondly, It teacheth us how inquisitive we should be of the Affairs of our Brethren, and state of the Church, that so we may pray with a more bowelly sense of their wants for them: *Nehemiah*, when he heard of some that were come out of *Judea*, enquires how it fared with his Brethren there? and from the sad report he heard of their afflictions and reproaches, is put into a bitter passion, which he emptied with prayers and tears for them, into the bosome of God, *Nehem. 1. 4.* how could he have done this so feelingly, had he not first been acquainted with their distressed condition? We are many of us asking oft, what News? and reading Books of Intelligence, Foreign and National; but is it as *Athenians*, or as Christians? to fill our heads, or to affect our hearts? to fur-

nish us with matter of Chat, and talk by the fire-side with our Neighbours, or of Prayer to our God?

Thirdly, Labour to get a wide heart in prayer for all the Saints: God (it's said) gave *Solomon* a large heart of knowledge and wisdom, as the Sand of the Sea, 1 *Kings 4. 29.* Behold a mercy greater than that to *Solomon* is here; a large heart is better than a large head, to do good, than to know it; nothing is more unworthy than a selfish spirit; no selfishness worse than that which is vented in prayer: A Heathen could blame that *Athenian*, who in a drought pray'd for his own City, saying, *O Jupiter, rain upon the Fields of the Athenians*; but forgot that his Neighbours wanted as well as him. Many Heathens were great Admirers of this virtue of Charity; take one Instance for all: It was a Law among the *Romans*, that none should come near the *Emperors* Tent in the night upon pain of death; now there was one night a certain Soldier apprehended, standing near the *Emperors* Tent with a Petition to deliver unto him, who was therefore presently to be executed; but the *Emperor* hearing the noise from within his Pavillion, called out, saying, If it be for himself, let him dye, if for another, spare his life; being examined, it was found his Petition was for two of his Fellow-Souldiers that were taken asleep on the watch, so both he escaped death, and they punishment. Was this office of Charity so pleasing to an earthly Prince, as to dispense with a Law for its sake? O how acceptable then to our merciful God is it, to intercede for our Fellow-Saints? But the more to provoke

provoke you to the exercise of this duty in its full breadth and latitude, viz. for all Saints, Consider,

✓ *First*, This praying for all Saints, will prove thy love to Saints sincere. A man in praying for himself, or his Relations, stands not at that advantage to see the actings of pure Grace, as when he prays for such as have not these carnal dependencies on him; when thou prayest for thy self in want or sickness, how knowest thou that it is any more than the natural cry of the Creature? Is it for thy Family thou prayest? still thy flesh hath an interest in the work, and may help to quicken thee (if it be not the chief Spring to set thee a going) but when thy heart beats strongly with a sense of any others misery, that hath nothing to move thee, but his Christianity to be his Remembrancer, and thou canst in secret plead with God for him as feelingly, as if thou didst go on thy own Errand, truly thou breathest a gracious Spirit.

Secondly, As it will speak for the truth of thy Grace, so for the height and vigour of it, 'tis corruption that contracts our hearts; they were none of the best Christians of whom Paul gives this Character, *Phil. 2. 21. They sought their own*; as the heart advanceth in Grace, so it widens, and grows more publick spirited; the higher a man ascends a Hill, the larger his Prospect; one that stands upon the ground, cannot look over the next Hedge; his eye is confin'd within the compass of his own wall; thus the carnal spirit thinks of none but his own Estate or Stake, feels not the water till it comes into his own Cabbin; whereas Grace elevates the soul, and the more Grace a man hath, the more it will enable to look from himself over into the condition of his Brethren; such a one, he partakes of the nature of the heavenly bodies which shed their influences down upon the whole world; especially this would speak Grace high in its actings, if these circumstances concur with it. 1. When a Person is himself swimming in abundance of all enjoyments, and can then lay aside his own joy to weep and mourn for, and with any afflicted Saints, though at never so great a distance from them; thus did *Nehemiah* for his Brethren at *Jerusalem*, when himself was in a warm Nest, and had all the enjoyments that so great a Princes Court could afford; 'tis not usual for any but those of great grace, to feel the Cords of the Churches Afflictions through a bed of Downe on which themselves lie; it must be a *David* that can prefer *Jerusalem above his chief joy*. 2. On the other hand, when in the depth of our own personal troubles and miseries, we can yet reserve a large room in our prayers for any other Saints, speaks a great measure of Grace: It shewed the *Romans* strength and courage to be great, that they could spare several *Legions* to send into *Spain* for the help of their friends there; while *Hannibal* was near their own walls with a puissant Army: to be able to lend Auxiliary prayers to other afflicted Saints, or abroad to the Church of God, when thou thy self art engaged deeply with private sorrows, does signifie a very gracious spirit. 3. When in our own distresses, we can entertain the tidings of any other Saints mercies with joy

and thankfulness; this requires great Grace indeed, to act two so contrary parts well at the same time: The prosperity of others, too oft breeds envy and discontent in them that want it; if therefore thou canst praise God for others mercies, while the tears stand in thy eyes for thy own miseries, it is a rare temper, flesh and blood never learnt thee it, thou maist be sure.

To shut up this with a Caution, though we are to pray for all Saints, yet some call for a more special remembrance at our hands. *First*, Those that are near to us by other Relations: first by bond of Nature as well as of Grace, *Philemon, vers. 16. A Brother, beloved, especially to me; but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord*: 'tis true, the bond of the Spirit is more sacred than that of the flesh; *Sanctior est copula cordis quam corporis*; yet when that of the flesh is twisted with the other, it adds as force to the affection, so argument to the duty; therefore saith *Paul, much more unto thee*; Charity may begin, though it must not end at home. Again, by Domestick Relation, Society and Communion, whether Civil or Religious, these give an enforcement to the Duty; Master for Servant, and Servants for Masters; Minister for People, and People for Minister; he that starves his Family, is not like to feast his Neighbours; he that is a Churle to his Neighbours, is not like to be over-kind to strangers; so he that prays not for those who by these Relations stand so near to him, is very unlike to abound in this duty for others. *Secondly*, Those that are in distress; whoever you forget, remember these: If one be sick in our family, we will send him his portion before we carve for any that are at the Table; this is a fit season for love; a friend for adversity, is as proper as fire is for a Winters day: *Jobs* Friends chuse the right time to visit him in, but took not the right course of improving their visit; had they spent the time in Prayer for him, which they did in hot disputes with him, they had profited him, and pleased God more. *Again*, This is the season that the Tempter is busie; this Lion walks abroad in the night of affliction, hoping then to make the Christian his prey, and if he wakes, to make a prey of him; shall not we watch to pray for him? *Again*, this is the season of Gods most speedy answering prayers; *In the day that I cried, thou heardest me, Plal. 138.* that is, in the day of affliction; indeed now is the time when the Spirit of Christ will be stirring us up to pray; and when should we send our Letters, but when the Post calls? He that stirs thee up to pray for them, will be as careful to deliver up thy prayers and see an answer return'd. *Thirdly*, Such of the Saints as are of publick place and use: You pray for many here, while you pray for one. *Fourthly*, Such as have expressly desired, and engaged you to remember them at the Throne of Grace: Among Debts, Specialties are paid in the first place. Thou art a Debtor to all thy Brethren, and owest them a remembrance in thy prayers; but more especially them to whom thou hast particularly promised it: This is, as it were, a Bond under thy hand, given for further security of paying this debt to thy friend; whoever thou forgettest

gettest, remember him. Did the *Butlers* conscience accuse him for not remembering his promise to *Josiph*, who had engaged him (when he was restored to Court) to intercede with *Pharaoh* for him? *This day* (saith he) *I remember my faults*, Gen. 41. Much more hast thou cause to confess thy faults, who forgettest to make mention of them to the Lord, that have solemnly desired it at thy hands; to have promised the payment

of a sum of money, and to have failed, were not greater dishonesty. Thou maist prejudice his soul more by disappointing him of thy prayer, than his Estate could suffer for want of thy money; how knowest thou, but the mercy he wants is stopt, while thy prayers come to Heaven for it? That other Saints obtain by their prayers for us, what sometimes we do not by our own, is clear from *Job* 42. 8.

VERSE 19, 20.

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel.

For which I am an Embassador in Bonds.

CHAP. I.

Sheweth it is a Duty to desire the prayers of others, and why; it is also shewn that to do this, doth no wrong to Christs Mediation for us; with a short Application.

THe Apostle having laid out this duty of prayer in its full compass, taking all Saints within its circumference; he comes now to apply this general Rule, and claims a share in it himself; *And for me*: When he bids them pray for all Saints, he surely cannot be shut out of their prayers, who is not the least in the number.

In the words: *First*, Here is an Exhortation, or *Pauls* request for himself, and in him for all Ministers of the Gospel; *And for me*.

Secondly, The Matter of his Request; *That utterance may be given unto me*: not that he would confine and determine them in their prayers to this Request alone: but propounds it as a principal head to be insisted on by them on his behalf.

Thirdly, The end why he desires this; *That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel*.

Fourthly, A double Argument to back and enforce this his Request. *First*, Taken from his Office; *for which I am an Embassador*. *Secondly*, From his present afflicted state, *an Embassador in Bonds*.

First, Of the first, his Request: *And for me*.

First, We may note here, That People are to be taught the duty they owe to their Minister, as well as to others; though indeed no duty is harder for the Minister to press, or for the People to hear, for him to preach with humility and wisdom, or for them to receive without prejudice.

SECT. I.

Secondly, It is not only our duty to pray for others, but also to desire the prayers of others for

ourselves; if a *Paul* turns Beggar, and desires the remembrance of others for him, who then needs it not? This hath been the constant practice of the Saints: sometimes they call in the help of their Brethren upon special occasions to pray with them: Thus *Daniel*, Chap. 2. 18. when required to interpret the *Kings Dream*, makes use of *Hananiah*, *Mishael*, and *Azariah his Companions*; then *Daniel* went to his house, and made the thing known to these, that they would desire mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret. *Daniel* would not give an answer to the King, till he had got an answer from God; to prayer therefore he goes, no doubt he forgot not this Errand in his Closet, when at his solitary Devotions; but withal he calls in help to join in social prayer with him; he sends for them to his house, where it is probable they prayed together for the mutual quickning of their affections, and strengthening of their Petition, by this their united force; wherefore, *vers.* 23. he acknowledgeth the mercy as an answer to their concurrent prayers, *I thank thee O thou God of my fathers, who hast made known unto me now, what we desired of thee*: This justifies the Saints practice, when in any great strait of Temptation or Affliction, they get some other of the faithful to give a lift with them at this duty; sometimes we have them desiring their Brethrens prayers for them, when they cannot conveniently have it with them. Thus *Esther* sets the *Jews* in *Shushan* to prayer for her, *Esther* 4. 16. so our Apostle in many of his Epistles, desires the Saints to carry his name with them to the Throne of Grace, *Rom.* 15. 30. *2 Cor.* 1. 10, 11. *Col.* 4. 3. *Phil.* 22. 8. And not without great Reason: for,

First, God hath made it a debt, which one Saint

owes to another; now not to desire this debt to be paid, which God hath charged our Brethren with, is to undervalue the mercy and goodness of our God: Should a Legacy be left us by a friend, were it not a despising of his kindness, not to call upon the Heir who is to pay it? Surely God accounts he doth us a kindness herein, and therefore may take it ill, not to ask for it; it is not our usage to lose a debt for want of demand, and this is none of the least we have owing us.

Secondly, Many are the gracious promises that are made to such prayers of the faithful, one for another: *John 1. 5. 16. If any man see his Brother for a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them.* But you will say, How can the prayer of one obtain forgiveness for another? I answer, None is forgiven for the faith of another, this must be personal; but the believing fervent prayer of one, is an excellent means to obtain the Grace of Repentance and Faith for another, whereby he may come to be forgiven; so *James 5. 16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed:* Now in not desiring our Brethrens help in this kind, we make no use of these promises (the proper end of which, is, to encourage us to call in the Auxiliary Aid of others) as if such passages of Scripture might have been well spared for any need we have of them; should you see a piece of ground never sown or fed, you might well say, the ground is barren, or the Owner a bad Husband; either the promise is empty and useless, or we that don't improve it, are worse husbands for our Souls: but we cannot so say of the promise, if we consider the great fruit and advantage which the Saints in all Ages have reap'd from it. Did not *Daniel* get the knowledge of a great secret, as a return of his Companions prayers with him? Did not *Jobs* friends escape a great judgement that hung over their heads at his intercession? What a miraculous deliverance had *Peter*, at the prayers of a few Saints gathered together on his behalf? Bring not therefore an evil report upon this promise, seeing such sweet clusters as these are to be shewn that have been gathered from it.

S E C T. II.

Thirdly, Else we are guilty of quenching the Spirit of prayer, which may be done in our selves, and others also.

First, By this we may quench it in our selves, partly, because we neglect a duty: we are bid to *confess our sins to one another*; and for what end, but to have the benefit of mutual prayers? The same Spirit which stirs thee up to pray for thy self, will excite thee in many cases to set others at prayer for thee; which if thou dost not, thou overlay'st his motions, and so committest a sin.

Again, Thou quenchest the Spirit of prayer in thy self, by depriving thy self of that assistance which thou mightest receive in thy own prayers through theirs: for the Spirit conveys his quickning Grace to us in the use of instruments and means; he that doth not hear the Word preach't, quenches

his Spirit, because God useth this as Bellows to blow up and enkindle the Saints Grace; so he that desires not the prayers of others, quencth the Spirit of prayer in himself, because the exercise of their Grace in prayer for thee, may fetch down more Grace to be poured in unto thee.

Secondly, Thou maist be accessory to the quenching of the Spirit in others, because thou hindrest the acting of those Graces in them, which would have been drawn forth in prayer for thee, hadst thou acquainted them with thy condition: fire is quenched by subtracting Fuel, as well as by throwing on water; by opening thy wants or desires to thy Brethren, thou feedest the Spirit of prayer in them, as they have new matter administred to work upon: by acquainting them with the merciful providences of God to thee, thou prickst a song of praise for them: how many groans and sighs should God in prayer have had from thy Neighbour Saints, hadst thou not bit in thy temptations and afflictions from their knowledge? what peals of joy and thankfulness would they have rung, hadst thou not conceal'd thy mercies from them?

Fourthly, To express the humble sense we have of our own weakness, and the need we have of others help; humble souls are fearful of their own strength; they that have little, desire Partners with them in their Trade: but when they conceit their own private stock to be sufficient, then they can Trade by themselves: *Now ye are full, ye are rich, and have reigned as Kings without us*, saith *Paul* of the self-conceited *Corinthians*; the time was, you thought you had need of *Pauls* preaching to you, and praying for you, but now ye reign without us: O how many are there when time was, could beg prayers of every Christian they met, nothing but wants and complaints could be heard from them, which made them beg help of all they knew, to pray their corruptions down, and their graces up? but now they have left the Beggars Trade, and reign in an imaginary Kingdom of their self-conceited sufficiency; certainly as it shews want of charity not to pray for others, so no want of pride not to desire prayers from others.

Fifthly, That we may prevent Satans designs against us; he knows very well what an advantage he hath upon the Christian, when sever'd from his company; wherefore he labours what he can to hinder the conjunction of his solitary prayers, with the Auxiliary Aid his Brethren might lend him: *Sampsons* strength lay not in a single hair, but his whole lock; the Saints safety lies in communion, not in solitude and single devotion; how many alas concealing their temptation from others, have found their sorrows grow upon them after all their own private endeavours, and wrestlings in secret against them? like one, who when his house is on fire, tries to quench it himself, but is not able, and so hazards the loss of all he hath for want of timely calling his Neighbours to his help.

Sixthly, and lastly, The love we owe to our Brethren requires it, the Saints here live where none else love them but themselves, therefore they had need make much of one another: Now this of desiring their prayers, carries a three-fold expression of love to them.

1. By this we acknowledge the Grace of God in our Brethren, or else it is supposed we would not employ them in such a work: He that desires a Friend to present a Petition to the King on his behalf, shews, he believes him to be in favour, and one that hath some interest in the Prince. Now what more honourable testimony can we give to another, than to own him as a Child of God, one whose prayers are welcome to Heaven? We are bid to *prefer every one his Brother in honour*. Now no one way can we do this more, than by making use of their help at the Throne of Grace to be our Remembrancers to the Lord.

2. By this we do our utmost to interest our Brethren in the mercy we desire them to pray for: Were a Merchant to send some Commodity to Turkey or Spain, which he knows will make a gainful return, it would be a great favour to take others into partnership with him in the Adventure; and what Voyage is gainful like this of prayer? and whoever shares in the Duty, is partner in the Mercy.

3. By this we confirm them in a confidence of our readiness to pray for them; what consists Neighbourhood in, but a readiness to reciprocate kindnesses one to another? when that is at the service of one Neighbour, which is in the house of another. Now who will be bold or free with his Neighbour to take a kindness from him, that is not willing to receive the like? Be ye strange to your Friend, and you teach him to be so to your self; nothing endears Christians more in love, than an open heart one to another; a Friend should have no Cabinet in his bosom, to which he allows not his Friend a Key.

SECT. III.

Object. BUT do we not by desiring our Fellow-Saints prayers, intrench upon Christs Mediatory Office?

Ans. No, surely Christ would not command that, which would be a wrong to himself; there is a great difference betwixt our desiring Christ to pray for us, and our Fellow-Brethren; we desire Christ to present our persons and prayers, expecting acceptance of both through his blood and intercession; but no such matter from the prayers of our Brethren, we only desire them as Friends to bear us company to the Throne of Grace, there to present our prayers in a communion together, expecting the welcome of both their, and our prayers, not from them, but from Christ; relying on Christ to procure the welcome both to our prayers and theirs, at our heavenly Fathers hand.

Object. 2. But why then may we not desire the prayers of the deceased Saints, for the same purpose that we desire the prayers of those that live yet with us?

Ans. First, We have no Precept or Example for this in the Word; and unbidden there in duties of worship, is forbidden; we must not *be wise above what is written*: Not to use the means which God hath appointed, is a great sin, which was *Ahaz* his case; but to invent waies or means more than God hath appointed, is far worse. It is bad

enough for a Subject not to keep the Kings Laws; but far worse for him to presume to mint a Law of his own head: the first is undutiful, but the latter is a Traytor.

Secondly, We have no way of expressing our thoughts and desires to the Saints departed; why should we pray to them that cannot hear what we say? or where is the Messenger to send our minds by? or which the word in Scripture that saith, they hear in Heaven, what we pray on Earth?

Thirdly, 'Tis the Prerogative of Christ to be the only Agent in Heaven for his Saints on Earth; to which of the Angels or Saints did God say, Sit thou at my right hand? In the outward Temple, we find the whole Congregation praying, but into the Holy of Holiest, enter'd none but the High-Priest with his perfume; every Saint is a Priest to offer up prayers for himself and others on Earth; but Christ only as our High-Priest intercedes in Heaven for us. The glorious Angels and Saints there no doubt wish well to the Church below; but it is Christs Office to receive the incense of his Militant Saints prayers, which they send up from this outward Temple here below to Heaven, and to offer it with all their desires to God; so that to employ any in Heaven besides Christ to pray for us, is to put Christ out of Office.

SECT. IV.

Use. First, It reproves those into whose hearts it never yet came, to beg prayers for their own souls; surely they are great strangers to themselves, and ignorant what a privilege they lose; as Christ said to the *woman of Samaria*, if thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that asks, thou wouldest have askt, and he would have given. Did poor souls know who the Saints are, what Favourites with God, and how prevalent their prayers are with him, they would not willingly be left out of their remembrance? I never knew any, but as soon as God began to work upon them (though it were no more than to awaken their consciences) but they thought this worth their desiring; it's natural for men in straits to crave help. A Servant or a Child, when Master or Father are displeased, and blows are threatned, if they know any that have interest in their favour, and are more likely to prevail with them than others, then they entreat to become Suitors for them. When hunger and want pinch the poor, then if they have any Neighbour to be their friend, to speak to the Parish for them, he shall soon hear of them; now were the sense of their wants, or troubles of a higher nature, would they not be as earnest to desire prayers for their souls, as now they are to beg bread for their bodies? Well, you that fear God, and live among such, do your Duty, though they have not hearts to desire it at your hands; pray over their stupid souls before the Lord. When a Friend is sick, and his senses are gone, you do not stay to send for the Physician till he comes to himself, and is able to do it for him. You had need make the more haste to God for such as these, lest they go away in this Apostrophy of conscience, and so be past praying for.

Secondly,

Secondly, Those who desire prayers of Gods people, but hypocritically, and they are such as set others on work, but pray not for themselves, a certain sign of a naughty heart: Thus *Pharaoh* often call'd for *Moses* to pray for him and his Land, but we read not that ever he made any Address himself to God, but thought it enough to send another on his Errand; whereas a gracious soul will be sure to meet him he employs at the work: *I beseech you* (saith *Paul*) *to strive together with me* in your prayers to God for me; he did not slip the collar off his own neck, to put it on anothers, but drew together with them in it; else they that pray for thee, may pray the mercy away from thee.

Thirdly, Such that desire prayers of others, but it is only in some great pinch; if their Chariot be set fast in some deep slough of Affliction, then they send in all haste for some to draw them out with their prayer; who at another time change their thoughts of the Saints, their prayers, yea, and of God himself: The Frogs once gone, and *Moses* hears no more of *Pharaoh* till another Plague rubs up his memory. *Moses* he hears not *Pharaoh* cry, till *Pharaoh* hears the Frogs croak: Thus, as they say of *Coral*, 'tis soft in the water where it grows, and

hard when taken out: Many their consciences are soft and tender whilst sleeping in Affliction; but hard and stout when that is removed. *Pharaoh*, that so oft called *Moses* up to prayer, at last could not endure the sight of him; but forwarn'd him for ever coming in his sight: O take heed of this; when once the wretch came to that pass, and so strangely chang'd his Note, as to drive *Moses* from him, that had so often Bail'd and rescu'd him out of the hands of Divine Vengeance, then he had not long to live; for he remov'd the very Dam, and lift up the Sluce to let in ruine upon himself.

Fourthly, Such as desire others to pray for them, but vain-gloriously, to gain reputation for religion: Beware of this, yet charge not all for the hypocrisy of some; neither deprive thy self of the benefit of others prayers, out of an imaginary fear lest thou shouldst play the hypocrite therein; watch thy heart, but wave not the Duty; because some have strangled themselves with their own Garters, wilt thou therefore be afraid to wear thine? or because some Canting Beggars go about the Country to shew their Sores, which they desire not to have cured; wilt not thou therefore when wounded go to the Chirurgeon?

CH A P. II.

The Peoples Duty of praying for the Ministers of the Gospel, with several Reasons of it.

FROM this Request of the Apostle, we may note that the Ministers of the Gospel are in an especial manner to be remembred in the Saints prayers; and that,

SECT. I.

First, In regard of God, whose Message they bring; they come about his work, and deliver his Errand; not to pray for them, will be interpreted, you will not well to the business they have in hand for him; they do not only come from God, but with Christ: *We as workers together with him, beseech you not to receive the Grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 9. Christ and the Minister go into the Pulpit together, a greater than man is there; Master and servant are both at work.

Again, The blessing of the Ministers labour, is from God; not the hand that sets the plant or sows the seed; but Gods blessing gives the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 6. When *Melancthon* was first converted, the light of the Gospel shone with so clear and strong a beam on his own eyes, that he thought he should convert all he preached unto; he deem'd 'twas impossible his hearers should withstand that truth, which he saw with so much evidence; but he afterwards found the contrary, which made him say, *I see now that the old Adam is too hard for the*

young Melancthon. God carries the Key by his Girdle, that alone can open hearts, and prayer is the Key to open his; when Christ intended to send forth his Disciples to preach the Gospel, he sets them solemnly to prayer, *Mat. 9. ult.* Many are the promises which he hath given to the Ministers of the Gospel for their protection, that he will keep these Stars in his right hand, or else they had been on the ground, and stamp'd under foot long ere this, for their assistance and success in the work; *I will be thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*, Exod. 4. 12. *Go preach, I am with you to the end of the World*, Mat. 28. wherefore are these promises, but to be shot back again in prayers to God that gave them?

SECT. II.

Secondly, In regard of the Ministers themselves; there is not a greater object of pity and prayer in the whole World, than the faithful Ministers of Christ; if you consider,

First, The importance of their work; 'tis Temple-work, and that is weighty; which made *Paul* that had the broadest shoulders of all his Brethren, cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things? I am doing a great work* (saith *Nehemiah*) chap. 6. vers. 3. But what was that to this? no work more hazard-

dous to miscarry in than this; 'tis sad enough to drop to Hell from under the Pulpit (to hear the Gospel, and yet to perish) but O how dismal to fall out of it thither for unfaithfulness in the work? The consideration of this made *Paul* so bestir him; *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*

Secondly, It is a laborious work; *Know them which labour among you, and admonish you, 1 Thes. 5. 12. Those who labour in the Word and Doctrine, of mortars*, which labour to weariness; he that preaches as he should, shall find it a work, not a play; not a work of an hour while speaking in the Pulpit, but a Load that lies heavy on his shoulders all the week long; a labour that spends the Vitals, and consumes the Oyl which should feed the Lamp of nature; such a labour (in a word) as makes old age and youth oft meet together. The *Jews* took Christ to be about fifty years old, when he was little above thirty, *John 8. 57.* I find some give this reason of it, because Christ had so macerated his body with labour in preaching, fasting and watching, that it aged his very countenance, and made him look older than he was: Other Callings are (many of them) but as exercise to Nature, they blow off the ashes from its Coal, and help to discharge nature of those superfluities which oppress it; who eats his bread more heartily, and sleeps more sweetly than the Plow-man? But the Ministers work debilitates Nature; 'tis hard for him to eat and work too; like the Candle, he wastes while he shines; whatever work is thought harder than other, we have it borrow'd to set forth the Ministers labour; they are call'd Souldiers, Watch-men, Husbandmen, yea, their work is set out by the pangs of a woman in Travail; some of them indeed have easier labours than other (those who find more success of their Ministry than their Brethren) but who can tell the Throes that their souls feel, who all the time of their Ministry go in Travail, and bring forth dead Children at last?

Thirdly, 'Tis an opposed work by Hell and Earth.

First, By Hell; The Devil never lik'd Temple-work; he that was at *Joshuah's* right hand to resist him, is at the Ministers elbow to disturb him, and that both in Study and Pulpit also: *I would have come (saith Paul) but Satan hindered*; who can tell all the devices that Satan hath to take the Minister off, or hinder him in his work? One while he discourageth him, that he is ready with *Jonah*, to run away from his Charge; another while he is blowing of him up with pride; even *Paul* himself hath a Thorn given him in his flesh, to keep pride out of his heart; sometimes he roys him with passion, and leavens his zeal into fowreness and unmercifulness; this the Disciples were tainted with, when they call'd for fire to come down from Heaven upon those that stood in their way. Sometimes he chills their zeal; and intimidates their spirits into cowardize and self-pity: Thus *Peter* favour'd himself when he denied his Master; and when at another time, he dissembled with the *Jews*, to curry their favour.

Secondly, It is opposed by the wicked World:

To be a Minister (*saith Luther*) is nothing else but to derive the Worlds wrath and fury upon himself: How are they loaden with reproaches? This Dirt lies so thick no where, as on the Ministers Coat; what odious names did the best of men, the Apostles themselves go under? And it were well they would only smite them with the tongue; but you shall find in all Ages, Persecutors have thirsted most after their blood; the persecution in the *Aets*, begins with the cutting off of *James* his head; seven thousand could lie better hid in *Jezabel's* time, than one Prophet; these are the burdensome stones, which every one is lifting at, though none can do it without bruising their own fingers; in every National storm almost, these are taken up to be thrown over-board for those that rais'd it: How many are there of an opinion, that nothing keeps them from seeing happy days, but the standing of them and their Office? O miserable happiness, which cannot be bought and purchased, but with the ruine of those that bring the tidings of peace and salvation to them all! Such a happiness this would be, as the sheep had in the Fable, when persuaded to have the Dogs that kept the Wolves off, kill'd; or as the Passengers at Sea would have, when their Pilot is thrown over-board. In a word, such a happiness as the *Jews* had, when Christ was taken out of the way by their murderous hands; they slew him, to preserve themselves from the *Romans* destroying their City, but brought them with irreparable ruine by this very means upon their own head.

Fourthly, That which adds weight to all the former, is, that the men who are to bear this heavy burden, and to conflict with all these difficulties and dangers, are those, who have no stronger shoulders than others, for they are men subject to the like infirmities with their Brethren. Now will not all this melt you into compassion towards them, and your compassion send you to prayer for them? Shall they stand in the face of death and danger, where Satans Bullets, and mans also, fly so thick, and you not be at the pains to raise a breast-work before them for their defence by your prayers?

Bullets

SECT. III.

Thirdly, In regard of your selves; love to your selves will plead to pray for them.

1. Consider the Ministry is an Office set up on purpose for your sakes; it was never intended for the exalting of a few men above their Brethren, but for the service of your faith; the gifts that Christ hath given to men, *Ephes. 4.* (that is, their Office and Abilities to discharge it) they are both for the edifying of the body of Christ; and will you not pray for those, that from one end of the year to the other, are at work for you? If you had but a child or servant sent abroad about your worldly business, would you not send a Prayer after him? Thus did good *Jacob*, when his children went on his Errand to Egypt, *God Almighty give you mercy before the man.* Will not you do thus much for your poor Minister, and pray, *God Almighty go with him*, when in his Study to prepare, and when in the

the Pulpit to deliver, what he hath prepared for our souls.

Secondly, The Ministers miscarriage is dangerous to the people; therefore pray for them, lest you be led into temptation by their falls. The sins of Teachers, are the Teachers of sin; if the Nurse be sick, the Child is in danger to suck the disease from her, that lies at her breast; if the Minister be tainted with an Errour, it is strange if many of his people should not catch the infection; when, if he be loose and scandalous in his life, he is like a common Well or Fountain, corrupted and muddied, at which all the Town draw their water. The Devil aim'd at more than Peter, when he desired leave to try a fall with him: *Luke 22. 31. Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to winnow thee.* He knew his fall was like to strike up the heels of many others; the Ministers practice makes a greater sound than his Doctrine; they who forget his Sermon, will remember his example to quote it for their Apology and Defence when time serves. Peter withdrews, and other Jews dissembled with him, *Gal. 2. 12, 13.* Truly friends, your Ministers are but men, and of no stronger make than your selves, men subject to the like passions: He among them that presumes, he shall not slide into an Errour, or fall into a sin, is bolder than any promise in the Word gives him leave; they need your prayers as much as any, and those most, that fear their danger least.

Thirdly, By praying for the Minister, you take the most hopeful way to profit by his Ministry; such a soul as this, may come in expectation to have a portion laid on his Trencher, his Meal is spoke for; and such Guests as send to Heaven before they come to an Ordinance, are most likely to have the best entertainment. He that hears a Sermon, and hath not pray'd for the Minister, and the success of his labours, sits down to his meat before he hath crav'd a Blessing; he plays the Thief to his own soul,

while he robs the Minister of the assistance his prayers might have brought him in from Heaven. Pinch the Nurse, and you starve the Child; the less the Minister is pray'd for, the less it is to be fear'd will the people profit by him.

Fourthly, By praying for the Minister, you do not only render the Word he preacheth more effectual to your selves, but you also interest your selves in the good his Ministry does to others: As there is a way of partaking in others sins, so in others holy Services. He that strengthens the hands of a sinner any way in his wicked practices, makes his sin his own, and shall partake with him in the wages due to the work when the day of reckoning comes. So he that strengthens the Ministers hand in his holy work, whether by prayer, countenance, or relief of his necessities, becomes a partaker with him in his service, and shall not be left out in the reward, *Math. 10. 40.* We read there of a Prophets reward given to private Christians; they who communicate with the Minister in his labour, by any subserviency to it, shall share in the reward; when God comes to reward his Prophets for their faithful service, then Obadiah that hid them from the fury of their Persecutors; then Onesiphorus that refresh'd their bowels; yea, then all those faithful ones that put up their fervent prayers for the free course of the Gospel in their Ministry, shall be call'd in to share with them in the reward. He that hath but a fifteenth part in a Ship, is an owner, as well as he that hath more; and when the Voyage is over, he hath his share of the Return that is made, proportionable to his part. O what an Encouragement is this to have a stock going in this Bottom? yea, to venture deeper than ever at the Throne of Grace for the now despised Ministers of Christ, seeing Heavens promise is our ensuring Office to secure all we send to Sea upon this account.

CHAP. III.

Wherein is shewn, what the faithful Ministers of the Gospel chiefly desire Prayers for; a threefold importance of the Apostles Request, when he desires utterance may be given him; with some short Notes therefrom.

2. THE second Branch in the general Division of the words, follows; and contains the matter of the Apostles request to the Church of Ephesus; or what he desires them to mention to God in his behalf, *That utterance may be given to me.*

SECT. I.

Where observe first the spirituality of his desire, he sets them not a praying for carnal things, the worlds honour, or riches; no, we hear him not so much as mention his necessities and outward wants, which he being now a Prisoner, 'tis like he was no

great stranger to; but they are spiritual wants he most groans under, he desires the charity of their Prayers, more than of their Purse.

Secondly, Observe the publick concernment of that he begs prayers for, *That utterance may be given to me;* this is not a personal priviledge; that would redound only to his own private advantage, but which renders him useful to others, that which may fit him for his publick employment in the Church; from which we may gather this Note.

A faithful Ministers heart runs more on his work, than on himself; that which he chiefly desires, is;

how he may best discharge his Ministerial Trust. No doubt *Paul* spake out of the abundance of his heart; that comes out first, of which his heart was most full, and for which his thoughts were most solicitous; as if he had said, If you will take me into your prayers, let this be your Request, *That utterance may be given me*; wherever almost you find him begging prayers, he forgets not this, *2 Thes. 3.*

1. Pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course. *Col. 4. 3.* Praying for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ. Admirable are the expressions whereby this holy man declares how deeply his heart was engaged in the work of the Lord, *Rom. 1. 9.* He tells them that his very soul and spirit was set upon it; whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son; never did any more long for preferment in the Church, than he to preach the Gospel to the Church: *Ver. 11. I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift*: He professeth himself a debtor to all sorts of men; he hath a heart and tongue to preach to all that have an ear to hear. *I am a Debtor both to Greeks, and to the Barbarians; to the wise, and to the unwise, ver. 14.* Yea he was ready to preach the Gospel at Rome it self, *ver. 15.* where he should stand in the mouth of death and danger; this so took up his thoughts, that for it he threw all his worldly concerns at his heels; as for the Worlds riches, he professeth he progged not for it; *I seek not yours but you, 2 Cor. 12. 14.* He had a nobler Merchandize in his eye, he had rather preach them into Christ, than their money into his Purse: and for their respect and love, though it was due debt to him, yet he lays it aside, and on he will go with his work, though they give him no thanks for his pains. *I will very gladly spend and be spent; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.* His duty he will do to them, and leaves them to look to theirs to him: The Nurse draws forth her breast to the Child, though froward, because she looks for her reward not from the Child, but its Parent; God will reward the faithful Minister, though his people will not thank him for his labour. *In a word, his very life was not valued by him, when it stood in competition with his work: Acts 20. 24. But none of these move me, neither count I my life dear, that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus*: And not without great Reason is it, that Ministers should prefer their Duty above all temporal respects; they are servants to God, and a servant must look to his work, whatever becomes of himself. *Abrahams* servant would not eat till he had done his Message; and when it sped, neither would he stay then to lose time, but posts back again with all expedition to his Master, *Gen. 24. 33.* He said well, who was employed to relieve the City of Rome with Corn; when the Master of the Ship would have had him stay for fair weather, answered, 'tis necessary that we sail, not that we live: 'Tis necessary the Minister should fulfill his Ministry, not that he should be rich, not that he should be in reputation; the incomparable value of souls is such, as should make us hazard our whole temporal stake to promote their eternal

salvation: he that wins souls is wise, though he lose his own life in the work.

SECT. II.

But we come to a more particular enquiry into these words, what the *Apostle* means by *utterance*, which he desires may be given him. A parallel place to this we have, *Col. 4. 3, 4.* Three things we may conceive the *Apostle* drives at in this his Request.

First, By utterance may be meant, liberty to preach the Gospel; that his mouth might not be stopp'd by the Persecutor, who had him already his Prisoner: now he desires they would pray for him, that he might not be quite taken off his work.

Note 1. Where first observe, What a grievous affliction it is to a faithful Minister to be denied liberty to preach the Gospel: so long as *Paul* might preach though in a Chain, he is not much troubled, the Word is free, though he be bound; but to have his mouth stopp'd, to see poor souls ready to perish for want of that bread which he hath to give out, and yet may not be allowed this liberty, goes to his heart. *O pray*, saith he, *that utterance may be given*: If he may not preach, neither would he live; for upon this account alone he desired life, the furtherance of their faith, *Phil. 1. 25.* O how far are they from *Pauls* mind, to whom 'tis more tedious to preach, than grievous to be kept from the work! how seldom should we see some in the Pulpit, were it not a necessary expedient to bring in their Revenue at the years end?

SECT. III.

Note Secondly, The liberty of the Gospel, and of the Ministers to deliver it, are in especial manner to be prayed for.

First, Because this is strongly opposed and malign'd by Satan and his Instruments; wherever God opens a door for his Gospel, there Satan raiseth his Batteries: *1 Cor. 16. 9. A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many Adversaries*: no sooner doth God open his shop windows, but the Devil he is at work to shut them again, or hinder the Free-trade of his Gospel: Other mens servants can work peaceably in their Masters shop, but as for Gods servants, every one hath a stone to throw in at them, as they pass by; when *Paul* began to preach at *Thessalonica*, the City was presently in an uproar and cry, *These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also*, *Acts 17. 6.* Indeed they said true, let the Gospel have but liberty, and it will turn the world upside down, it will make a change, but a happy one; this the Devil knows, and therefore dreads its approach.

Secondly, Because it is the choicest mercy that God can bless a Nation with; happy are the people that are in such a case; 'tis the Gospel of the Kingdom, it lifts a people up to Heaven; we could better spare the Sun out of its Orb, than the preaching of the Gospel out of the Church. Souls might find

find the way to Heaven, though the Sun did not lend them its light; but without the light of truth, they cannot take one right step towards it: *Work* (saith Christ) *while ye have the light*, John 12. 36. Salvation-work cannot be done by the Candle-light of a natural understanding, but by the Day-light of Gospel Revelation; this Sun must rise before man can go forth to this labour.

Thirdly, 'Tis in Gods power to preserve the liberty of his Gospel and Messengers, in spite of the Devil and his Instruments; therefore indeed Paul sends them not to Court to beg his liberty, but to Heaven: God had Nero closer Prisoner than he had Paul: *Rev. 3. 8. Behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it.* At Ephesus were many Adversaries we heard, yet the door was kept open; Christ carries the Keys of the Church-door at his Girdle: *Rev. 3. 7. He that hath the Key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth*; the Key of the House of David, so *Isa. 22. 22.* The Church is Christs house, and the Master sure will keep the Key of his own door.

Fourthly, Prayer hath a mighty power with God to preserve or restore liberty to his Gospel and Messengers; it hath fetcht home his servants from banishment, it hath brought them out of their Dungeon; the prison could not hold Peter, when the Church was at prayer for him. It hath had a mighty influence into the Churches affairs when at the lowest ebb; it was a sad world to the Church in Nero's time, when Paul set the Saints a praying for Kings, and those that were in Authority, which prayers, though they were not answered in Nero, yet I doubt not but afterwards they were in *Constantine*, and other *Christian Princes*, under whose Royal Wing the Church of Christ was cherished and protected.

Fifthly and lastly, Pray for their liberty, because when the Gospel goes away, it goes not alone, but carries away your other mercies along with it: The Hangings are taken down when the Prince removes his Court; where the Minister hath not liberty to preach the Truth, the people will not long have liberty to profess it. When it went ill with James the Apostle, it went not well with the Church at Jerusalem, *Acts 12. 1, 2.* Nor can that place look long to enjoy its outward peace; when God removes his Gospel, it is to make way for worse company to come, even all his fore plagues and judgements, *Jer. 6. 8.*

S E C T. IV.

Secondly, When the Apostle desires utterance to be given him, he may mean, that he may have a word given him to preach; *ἵνα μοι δοθῇ λόγος*, according to that which Christ promiseth, *Matth. 10. 19. It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* From which we may Note,

First, That Ministers have no ability of their own for their work. O how long may they sit tumbling their Books over, and beating their brains, till God comes to their help! and then (as *Jacob's* Venison) 'tis brought to their hand; if God drop not down his assistance, we write with a Pen that

hath no ink; if any in the World need walk patiently upon God more than others, the Minister is he.

Secondly, Observe, that those who are most eminent for gifts and grace, have meanest thoughts of themselves, and are acquainted most with their own insufficiency. Paul himself is not ashamed to let Christians know, that if God brings it not into him, he cannot deal out to them; he cannot speak a word to them, till he receives it from God, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God, who hath also made us able Ministers of the New Testament; he is the able Minister whom God enables.

Thirdly, Observe, the meanest Christian may by his faithful prayers help to make the Ministers Sermon for him: Pray, saith the Apostle, *that utterance may be given me*; that I may have from God what I should deliver to others: O what an useful Instrument is a praying Christian! he may not only help his own Minister but others, even all the World over. Paul was now at Rome, and sends for prayers as far as to the Saints at Ephesus.

S E C T. V.

Thirdly, By utterance he may mean a faculty of speech, a readiness and facility to deliver to others what he hath been enabled to conceive in his own mind of the will of God; many eminent servants of God have been very sensible of, and much discourag'd for their impedit speech, and hesitant delivery. Now this may proceed from a natural cause, or supernatural.

First, From a natural cause; as, 1. From a defect in the Instruments of speech, which some think was the cause of Moses his complaint, *Exod. 4. 10. I am not eloquent, but slow of speech*: And this discouraged him from being sent on Gods Errand; but God can compensate the hesitancy of the tongue with the Divine power of the matter delivered; this Moses, who was so slow in speech, yet was mighty in words, *Acts 7. 22.* able to make Pharaohs stout heart to tremble, though he might stammer in the delivery of it; God promised indeed to be with his mouth, yet 'tis probable he did not cure his natural infirmity; for we find him complaining afterwards of it: Such natural imperfections therefore should neither discourage the Minister, nor prejudice the people; but rather make him more careful, that the matter be weighty he delivers; and them, that their attention be more close and united. 2. From a weak memory; he that reads in a bad print, where many letters are defac'd, cannot read fast and smooth, but oft will be stopt to study what is next. Memory is an inward Table or Book, out of which the Minister reads his Sermon unseen; if the notions or meditations we have to deliver, be not fairly imprinted on our memory, no wonder that the tongue is oft at a stand, except we should speak to no purpose; if the Hopper be stopt, the Mill cannot grind; or if the Pipe that feeds the Cistern be obstructed, it will be seen at the

V the Cock; when God hath assisted in the study, we need him to strengthen our memory in the Pulpit. 3. From fear; if the heart faint, 'tis no wonder the tongue falters; this 'tis like was at the bottom of *Jeremiah's* excuse, *Chap. 1. 6. Ah Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child*: That is, I want the courage and spirit of a man to wrestle with those oppositions that will certainly meet me in the work; that this was his infirmity, appears by the method God takes for the cure: *Ver. 7, 8. Say not I am a Child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee.*

Secondly, Supernatural, where none of these defects are, but the Minister stands best furnished, and in greatest readiness for his work; yet let but God turn the Cock, and there is a stop put to the whole work; not only the preparation of the heart, but the answer of the tongue, both are of the Lord, *Prov. 16. 1. God keeps the Key of the mouth as well as of the heart; not a word can get out, but sticks in the teeth, while God opens the doors of the lips to give it a free egress. He open'd the mouth of the Ass, and stoppt the mouth of that wicked Prophet its Master. Num. 22. hear him confessing as much to Balak, ver. 38. Lo I am come unto thee; Have I now any power at all to say any thing? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.* Never man desired more to be speaking than he, that which should have got him his hire, the wages of unrighteousness, for he lov'd it dearly: But God had tongue-ty'd him; nay, even holy men, when they would speak the truth, and that for God, cannot deliver themselves of what they have conceived in their inward meditations; hence *David's* prayer, *Open my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* God tells *Ezekiel*, he would make his tongue cleave to his mouth; he should not reprove them, though he would, *chap. 3. 26.*

S E C T. VI.

Use 1. Do Ministers depend thus on God for utterance? This speaks to you my Brethren in the Lords work, do nothing for which God may stop your mouths when you come into the Pulpit.

First, Take heed of any sin smothering in your bosoms; canst thou believe God will assist thee in his work, who canst lend thy hand to the Devils? maist thou not rather fear he should hang a padlock on thy lips, and strike thee dumb, when thou goest about thy work? You remember the story of *Origen*, how after his great fall he was silenc'd in the very Pulpit; for at the reading of that *Pf. 50. 16. What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes? or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth?* the conscience of his sin would not suffer him to speak. O 'tis sad, when the Preacher meets his own Sin in his Subject; and pronounceth sentence against himself while he reads his Text; if thou wouldst have God assist thee, be zealous, and repent; when the Trumpet is washt, then the holy Spirit (thou maist hope) will again breath through it.

Secondly, Beware thou comest not in the confi-

dence of thy own preparations, God hath declared himself against this kind of pride; *By strength shall no man prevail, 1 Sam. 2. 9.* A little bread with Gods blessing, may make a Meal for a Multitude, and great provision may soon shrink to nothing, if God help not in the breaking of it: 'Tis not thy Sermon in thy head, or Notes in thy Book, will enable thee to preach, except God open thy mouth; acknowledge therefore God in all thy ways, and lean not to thy own understanding: The swelling of the heart, as well as of the wall, goes before a fall; did the *Ephraimites* take it so ill, that *Gideon* would steal a victory without calling them to his help? how much more may it provoke God, when thou goest to the Pulpit, and passest by his door in the way without calling for his assistance?

Use 2. Secondly, To the People, take heed you do not stop your Ministers mouth; this you may do,

First, By admiring their gifts, and applauding their persons, especially when this is accompanied with unthankfulness to God that gives them; when you applaud the man, but you do not bleis God for him. Princes have an evil eye upon those Subjects that are over-popular; God will not let his Creature stand in his light, nor have his honour suffer by the reputation of his Instrument; the Mother likes not to see the Child taken with the Nurse, more than with her self. O how foolish are we, who cannot love, but we must dote; not honour, but we must adore also: He that would keep his posie fresh and sweet, must smell, and lay it down again; not hold it too long in his hand, or breath too much upon it; this is the way soon to welter it. To over-do, is the ready way to undo; many fair mercies are thus over-laid, and press'd to death by the excess of a fond affection, or when it is accompanied with detracting of others; the abilities of one are cried up, to cry down another; I am of *Paul*, and I of *Apollos*; thus the Disciples of either advanced their Preacher, to hold up a faction.

Secondly, You may provoke God to withdraw his assistance by expecting the benefit from man, and not from God; as if it were nothing but to take up your Cloak and Bible, and you are sure to get good by such a ones Ministry; this is like them in *James*, that say, *We will go into such a City, and get gain*; as if it were no more to hear with profit, than to go to the Tap, and draw Wine or Beer in your own Cellar. It is just thou shouldst find the Vessel frozen, the Minister, I mean, straitned, and his abilities bound up, because thou comest to him, as unto a God, who is but a poor instrument. O say not to him, give me grace, give me Comfort, as *Rachel* ask'd children of her husband; but go to thy God for these, in thy attendance on man.

Thirdly, By rebelling against the light of truth that shines forth upon you in his Ministry. God sometimes stops the Ministers mouth, because the People shut their hearts; why should the Cock run to have the water spilt upon the ground? Christ himself did not many mighty works, he could not (saith *Mark*) in his own Countrey, because of their unbelief: *Dei justitia non permittebat, ut sanctum canibus daretur*, saith *Brugensis* upon the place.

It

It is just God should take away the Ministry, or stop the Ministers mouth, when they despise his Counsel, and the Word becomes a reproach to them; I am sure it is a sad damp to the Ministers spirit, that preacheth long to a gainfaying people, and no good omen to them. The Mothers milk

goes away sometimes before the Childs death: God binds up the Spirit of his Messengers in judgement; *Ezek. 3. 26. I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be a reprover to them, for they are a rebellious house.*

CHAP. IV.

Sheweth what a Mystery u, and in what Respects the Gospel is so.

3. **T**HE third Branch in the Division of the words, presents us with the end why he desires their prayers for utterance to be granted him, exprest in these words, *That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel*; where there are these three Observables. *First*, The sublime nature of the Gospel, it is a *Mystery*. *Secondly*, Wherein lies the work of a Gospel-Minister, *To make known the Mystery of the Gospel*. *Thirdly*, The manner how he is to perform this work, *That I may open my mouth boldly*. *First*, of the first.

SECT. I.

Observe. The Gospel is a Mystery; the Greek word *μυστήριον*, some derive from *μύω*, to teach any secret belonging to Religion; others of *μύω* or *μύζω*, to shut the mouth, because those that were initiated, or admitted to be present at the Religious Rites and Mysteries of the Heathens (who were called *μύσται*) might not reveal them to those that were *ἀμύσται*, or not initiated; therefore they had an Image before the Temple, holding his finger upon his mouth, to put them in mind as they went in and out, of keeping secret what was done within. Indeed the Mysteries in their Idolatrous worship were so impure and filthy, that nothing but secrecy could keep them from being abhor'd and detested by the more sober part of Mankind: and it is not unworthy of our Noting, what I find observed to my hand by a learned Pen, That the Spirit of God should make choice of that Word in the *New Testament* so often, to express the holy Doctrine of Truth and Salvation contained in it, which was so vilely abused by those Heathenish Idolaters; surely it shews them to be over-scrupulous, that judge it unlawful any way to make use of those names or things which have been abused by Heathens or Idolaters. *B. Sanderfon* on *1 Tim. 3. 16*. But to return to the word *Mystery*; it hath obtain'd in our usual speech to be applied to any secret, natural, civil, or religious, which lies out of the Road of vulgar understandings. In Scripture it is generally used for religious secrets; and it is taken both in an evil sense, and in a good.

First, In an evil sense, *2 Thes. 2. 7*. The Mystery of iniquity doth already work; whereby is meant the secret rising of Antichristian Dominion,

whereof some foundations were laid even in the Apostles days; Errour is but a day younger than Truth; when the Gospel began first to be preached by Christ and his Apostles, Errour presently put forth her hand to take it by the heel, and supplant it. The whole System of Antichristianism is a mystery of policy and impiety; Mystery is writ upon the Whore of *Babylons* forehead, *Rev. 17. 2*. And *Casaubon* tells us the same word was writ upon the Popes *Mitre*; if so, it is well he would own his name: My soul, enter not thou into their secrets.

Secondly, In a good sense; sometimes for some particular Branch of Evangelical Truth: Thus the rejection of the *Jews*, and calling of the *Gentiles*, called a Mystery, *Rom. 11. 25*. The wonderful change of those that shall be upon Earth at the end of the World, *1 Cor. 15. 51*. The Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, *1 Tim. 3. 16*. with others. Sometime for the whole body of the Gospel, as to the Doctrine of it, call'd a Mystery of Faith, *1 Tim. 3. 9*. As to the purity of its precepts, and rules for a holy life, a Mystery of godliness. As to the Author, Subject and End of it, called the Mystery of Christ, *Ephes. 3. 4*. It was revealed by him, treats of him, and leads souls to him; and lastly, in regard of the blessed Reward it promiseth to all that sincerely embrace it, called the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, *Mark 4. 11*. This Gospel is the glorious Mystery we are now to speak of; and in the second place come to shew in what respect it is a Mystery, or why so called by the Spirit of God.

SECT. II.

First, Because it is known only by Divine Revelation, such a secret it is; that the wit of man could never have found out: There are many secrets in nature, which with much plodding and study have at last been discovered; as the Medicinal virtue of Plants, and the like; but the Gospel is a secret, and contains in it such Mysteries, as were *omni ingenio altiora*, as *Calvin* saith. What man or Angel could have thought of such a way for reconciling God and man; as in the Gospel is laid out? How impossible was it for them to have conjectured, what purposes of love were lockt up in the heart of God towards fallen man, till himself did

did open the Cabinet of his own Counsel? or had God given them some hint of a purpose he had for mans recovery, could they ever have so much as thought of such a way as the Gospel brings to light? surely as none but God could lay the plot, so none but himself could make it known; the Gospel therefore is call'd, *A Revelation of the Mystery which was kept secret since the world began*, Rom. 16. 25.

Secondly, Because the Gospel when reveal'd, its Truths exceed the grasp of humane understanding, they are to the eye of our reason, as the Sun is to the eye of our body; such a *nimum excellens*, that dazles and overpowers the most piercing apprehension; they disdain to be discuss'd and tryed by humane reason. That there are three subsistences in the Godhead, and but one Divine Essence; we believe, because there reveal'd: But he that shall fly too near this light, as thinking to comprehend this mysterious Truth in his narrow reason, will soon find himself lost in his bold enterprize: God and man united in Christs Person, is undeniably demonstrable from the Gospel; but alas, the cordage of our understanding is too short to fathom this great deep: *Without controversie* (saith the Apostle) *great is the Mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. 'tis a Truth without controversie, *ὁμολογούμενος*, it is confest of all; yet such a Mystery as is not fordable by our short-legg'd understanding. That there is no name but the name of Jesus, by which we can be saved, is the grand Notion of the Gospel: But how many Mysteries are wrapt up in one Truth? who that should have seen the Babe Jesus when he lay in the Manger, and afterward meanly bred under a Carpenter, and at last executed for a Malefactor, could have imagin'd (as one saith) that upon such weak hinges, should move such a glorious design for mans salvation? But who dares think it unreasonable to believe that upon Gods report to be true, which we cannot make out by our own understanding? Some things we apprehend by Reason, that cannot be known by Sense; as that the Sun is bigger than the Earth; some things by Sense, which cannot be found out by Reason; that the Loadstone attracts Iron, and not Gold, our eye beholds; but why it should, there our Reason is dunc'd and pos'd: Now if in Nature we question not the truth of these, though Sense be at a loss in one, and Reason in the other; shall we in Religion doubt of that to be true, which drops from Gods own mouth and pen, because it exceeds our weak understanding? Wouldst thou see a Reason, saith *Augustin*, for all that God saith; look into thy own understanding, and thou wilt find a Reason, why thou seest not a Reason?

SECT. III.

Thirdly, 'Tis a Mystery, in regard of the paucity of those to whom it is reveal'd; secrets are whisper'd into the ears of a few, and not exposed to all. *Unto you it is given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, Mark 4. 11. Who were those, you say? but a few Disciples who believed on his Name;

the greater part of the world were ever strangers to this Mystery; before Christs time, it was impaled within a little spot of ground of the *Jewish Nation*; since it came abroad into the *Gentile world*, and hath been travelling above sixteen hundred years hither and thither, how few at this day are acquainted with it? Indeed where its glorious light shines long, many get a literal notional knowledge of it; it were strange that men should walk long in the Sun, and not have their faces a little tann'd with it; but the spiritual and saving knowledge of this Mystery, is reveal'd but to few; for the number of Saints is not great, compar'd with the Reprobate World.

Fourthly, In regard of the sort of men to whom it is chiefly imparted, such as are in Reason most unlikely to dive into any great Mysteries; those who are despised by the wise world, and the great States of it, as poor and base, 1 Cor. 1. 26. *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the World, to confound the wise, the weak things of the World, to confound the things which are mighty*. If we have a secret to reveal, we do not chuse weak and shallow heads to impart it unto; but here is a Mystery which Babes understand, and wise men are ignorant of it: *I thank thee O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast reveal'd them unto Babes*: The people, who were so scorn'd by the proud Pharisees, as those that knew not the Law, John 7. 48. to them was the Gospel reveal'd, while these Doctors of the Chair were left in ignorance; 'tis reveal'd to the poor many times, and hid from Kings and Princes; Christ passeth often by Palaces to visit the poor Cottage. Herod could get nothing from Christ (who out of curiosity so long desired to see him) Luke 23. 8. whereas the poor woman of Samaria with a Pitcher in her hand, Christ vouchsafeth her a Sermon, and opens to her the saving truths of the Gospel; Pilate mist of Christ on the Bench, while the poor Thief finds him, and Heaven with him on the Cross; devout women are past by, and left to perish with their blind zeal, while Harlots and Publicans are converted by him.

SECT. IV.

Fifthly, A Mystery in regard of the kind of knowledge the Saints themselves have of it.

First, Their knowledge is but in part, and imperfect; the most of what they know, is the least of what they do not know; the Gospel is as a rich piece of Arras, roll'd up; this God hath been unfolding ever since the first promise was made to Adam, opening it still every Age wider than other; but the world shall sooner be at an end, than this Mystery will be fully known. Indeed as a River (which may be breaks forth at first from the small Orifice of a little Spring) does widen its channel, and grows broader, as it approacheth nearer to the Sea; so the knowledge of this Mystery doth spread every Age more than other, and still will, as the World draws nearer to the Sea of Eternity, into which it must at last fall. The Gospel appear'd but a little Spring in Adams time, whose

whose whole Bible was bound up in a single Promise; this encreased to a Rivulet by *Abrahams* time, and this Rivulet enlarged it self into a River in the days of the *Prophets*; but when Christ came in the flesh, then knowledge flowed in amain; the least in the Gospel-state is said to be greater than the greatest before Christ: So that in comparison of the darker times of the Law, the knowledge Christians now have, is great; but compared with the knowledge they shall have in Heaven, 'tis little, and but peep of day.

Secondly, It is mysterious and dark: Gospel-truths are not known in their native glory and beauty, but in shadows; we are said indeed *with open face to behold the glory of God*, but still it is *as in a Glass*; now you know the Glass presents us with the Image, not with the face it self; we do not see them as indeed they are, but as our weak eyes can bear the knowledge of them; indeed this glass of the Gospel is clearer than that of the Law was, we see Truths through a thinner veil, Baptism is clearer than Circumcision, Lords Supper than Passover; in a word, New Testament than Old; yet there is nothing of Heaven reveal'd in the Gospel, but it is translated into our earthly language, because we are unable, while here below, to understand its Original; who knows, or can conceive, what the Joys of Heaven are, so as to speak of them in their own Idiom and propriety? but a Feast we know; what a Kingdom is, we understand; with Riches and Treasures we are well acquainted; now Heaven is set out by these things, which in this World bear the greatest price in mens thoughts; in Heaven is a Feast, yet without Meats; Riches, without Money; a Kingdom without Robes, Scepter, and Crown, because infinitely above these; hence 'tis said, *We know not what we shall be*, 1 Joh. 3. Our apprehensions of these things are manly, compar'd with those under the Law; but childish, compar'd with the knowledge which glorifi'd Saints have; therefore, 1 Cor. 13. 10, 11. as Paul saith, *He put away childish things*, when he grew up into further knowledge of the Gospel; so he tells us of an imperfect knowledge, which yet he had, *That must be done away, when that which is perfect is come*.

Sixthly, The Gospel is a Mystery, in regard of the contrary operation it hath upon the hearts of men; the eyes of some it opens, others it blinds; and who so blind as those whose eyes are put out with light? Some, when they hear the Gospel, are prick'd in their hearts, they can hardly stay till the Preacher hath done his Sermon, but cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?* others are hardened by it, and their Consciences seared into a greater stupidity. At Pauls Sermon, Acts 17. some mocked; others were affected so with his Discourse, *That they desired to hear it again*; what a mysterious Doctrine

is this, that sets one a laughing, another a weeping? That is the favour of life to some, and of death to others?

S E C T. V.

Seventhly and lastly, A Mystery it is, in regard of those rare and strange effects it hath upon the godly, and that both in respect of their judgements and practice; as the Gospel is a *Mystery of Faith*, so it enables them to believe strange Mysteries; to believe that which they understand not, and hope for that which they do not see; it enables them to believe *Three* to be *One*, and *One* to be *Three*; a *Trinity of Persons* in the *Deity*, and an *Unity of Essence*; a *Father*, not older than his *Son*; a *Son*, not inferiour to his *Father*; a holy *Spirit* proceeding from *Both*, yet equal to *Both*; it teacheth them to believe that *Christ* was born in time, and that he was from Everlasting; that he was comprehended within the *Virgins* womb, and yet the Heaven of Heavens not able to contain him; to be the *Son of Mary*, and yet her *Maker*, that was his *Mother*; to be born without sin, and yet justly to have died for sin; they believe that God was just in punishing *Christ*, though innocent; and in justifying penitent Believers, who are sinners; they believe themselves to be great sinners, and yet that God sees them in *Christ* without spot or wrinkle.

Again, As the Gospel is a Mystery of godliness, it enables them to do as strange things as they believe; to live by anothers spirit, to act from anothers strength, to live to anothers will, and aim at anothers glory; they live by the spirit of *Christ*, act with his strength, are determin'd by his will, and aim at his glory; it makes them so meek and gentle, that a Child may lead them to any thing that is good; yet so stout, that fire and faggot shall not fright them into a sin; they can love their Enemies, and yet for *Christ*'s sake can hate Father and Mother; it makes them diligent in their worldly Calling, yet enables them to contemn the Riches they have got by Gods blessing on their labour; they are taught by it, that all things are theirs, yet they dare not take a penny, a pin from the wicked of the world by Force and Rapine; it makes them so humble, as to prefer every one in honour above themselves; so to value their own condition, that the poorest among them would not change his estate with the greatest Monarch of the World; it makes them thank God for health, and for sickness also; to rejoyce when exalted, and as much when made low; they can pray for life, and at the same time desire to die: is not that Doctrine a Mystery which fills the Christians life with so many Riddles?

CHAP. V.

The Reason why the Gospel is slighted and persecuted, as also why carnal men bungle so in matters of Religion, shewn from the sublime Nature of Gospel-truths.

Use 1. **T**His gives us a reason why the Gospel, with the great offers it makes, is so slighted and rejected by the wicked world; the cause is, the blessings of the Gospel are a Mystery, and offer'd in such a way, that carnal hearts skill not of them, and therefore care not for them; the things it propounds, are such as like them well enough, might they have them in a way suited to their carnal apprehensions. The Gospel offers Riches and Honours; who are not taken with these? The Gospel opens a Mine of unsearchable Riches, but in a Mystery; it shews them a way how to be rich in Faith, rich to God, rich for another World, while poor in this. Our Saviour went about to learn the young man in the Gospel a way to be rich; not by purchasing more Land, but by selling what he had, but he would not follow his counsel: The Gospel offers pleasures and delights, and these the sensual World like well enough, but alas, they please not their carnal coarse palate, because they are pleasures in a Mystery, pleasures in mourning for sin, and mortifying of sin, not pleasures in satisfying them: Pleasures in communion with Christ at an Ordinance, not with a knot of good Fellows over a Pot at an Ale-House; pleasures to the eye and palate of faith, not offense; to feed their souls, not pamper and fat their bellies: In a word, the Gospel makes discovery of high and choice notions; surely now those, who are the more sober part of the World, Bookish men, and in love with good literature, whose souls crave intellectual food, and prize a Lecture more than a Feast, these will be highly pleased with the Truths the Gospel brings to light, being such rare Mysteries, that they can find in no other Book; yet alas! we see that the Gospel doth as little please this sort and rank of men, as any other; had it been fill'd with flowers of Rhetorick, Chymical Experiments, Philosophical Notions, or Maxims of Policy; O how greedily would they have embrac'd it? but it is wisdom in a Mystery. 1. Cor. 2. 6, 7. *We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this World, nor of the Princes of this World, that*

come to nought. Bradwardine a great Scholar, before he was meeken'd by the grace of the Gospel, slighted Pauls Epistles (as afterward he confess'd) because he did not express *Ingenium Metaphysicum*, a Metaphysical Head in his Discourses.

Secondly, It shews us the Reason why the Gospel and its Professors are not only slighted, but hated and persecuted.

1. For the Gospel, it is a Mystery, which the World knows not, and therefore oppos'd by it: Ignorance is the mother of persecution; *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*: The greatest Enemies the Gospel ever had, were not the

sensual, and open profane (though these bad enough) but the superstitious and ignorantly devout, these have been they who have shewn most fierceness and fury against the Gospel; Paul tells us of the devout persons that cruelly persecuted him, Acts 13. 15. None more hot against the Truth than Paul himself, who was a strict Pharisee, but bloody Enemy against the Truth; what Reason then have we to pray for the encrease of Gospel-light! the more the Gospel is known, the more kindly will it be entertain'd.

Again, The Professors of the Gospel, why are they so hated and maligned, but because they partake of the mysterious Nature of the Gospel, and therefore their worth is not known? They are high-born, but in a Mystery, you cannot see their birth by their outward breeding, Arms they bear, Revenues they have to live on, by which the World judges the greatness of Persons and Families: No their outside is mean, while their inside is glorious; and the World values them by what they know and see of their external port, and not by their inward graces; they pass as a Prince in a disguise of some poor mans cloaths through the World, and their Entertainment is accordingly. Had Christ put on his Robes of glory and Majesty when he came into the world, surely he had not gone out of it with so shameful and cruel a death; the World would have trembled at his Foot-stool, which we see some of them did, when but a beam of his Deity look'd forth upon them. Did Saints walk on Earth in those Robes which they shall wear in Heaven, then they would be fear'd and admir'd, by those who now scorn and despise them: But as God should not have had his design in Christs first coming, had he so appeared, so neither would he in his Saints, did the World know them, as one day they shall; therefore he is pleas'd to let them lie hid under the mean coverings of poverty, and other infirmities, that so he may exercise their suffering graces, and also accomplish his wrath upon the wicked for theirs against them.

Thirdly, The Gospel is a Mystery; this shews us the Reason why carnal men do so bungle, when they meddle with masters of Religion; let them speak of Gospel-truths, what ignorance do they shew? Even as a Country-man chops Logick, and speaks of the liberal Arts, so they of heavenly matters: Do we not see that those who in worldly affairs will give you a wise and solid answer, in the truths of the Gospel they speak like Children and Babes; yea, even those that have some brain-knowledge of the Scriptures, how dry and unfavoury is their Discourse of Spiritual things? they are like a Parable in a fools mouth; so when they engage in any duty of Religion, put them to pray, hear the

Word

Word, or meditate upon what they have heard, you had as good give a Workmans Tools to him that was never of the Trade; they know not how to handle them, they go ungainfully about the work, and cut all into Chips; every Trade hath its Mystery, and Religion above all other Callings, which none but those that are instructed in it, know how to manage.

CHAP. VI.

Several Duties prest upon Saints from the Mystrious Nature of the Gospel.

Use 2. **F**OR Exhortation, to two sorts.

First, To the Saints, who are instructed in this Mystery.

SECT. I.

First, Be thankful that ever God reveal'd it to thee; O what a mercy is this, that thou hast life and immortality brought to light, that thy ears hear this joyful sound? never came such joyful News to Town, as the Gospel brings; what a poor Nation was this of ours, before the Gospel-day broke among us? blest God thy lot is cast where the Sun is up; the Gospel was indeed early preacht in the world, Adam had it soon after his Fall; but a short Gospel, a Mystery indeed to him, wrapt all up in one promise, and that a dark one; but now that one wedge of gold is beaten out into the whole Bible, a Gospel writ at length, and not in figures; you hear the Gospel not preacht in Law-terms, as the Jews did under Moses his Pedagogy; but Gospel in Gospel language; the Vail is taken off, which hid the beauty of Gospel-truths from their face; you hear it after it hath been rescu'd out of Antichrists hands, by whom for many Ages it was kept Prisoner; you live not in those dark times, when Gospel-truths were embas'd with the mean alloy of School-mans subtilties, and superstitious vanities, when more stones were given to break the teeth, than bread to feed the souls of people. The Conduit of the Gospel now runs with Wine, not twice or thrice a year, on some gaudy Festival day, but constantly, every Sabbath-day you have your fill of its sweetest truths; were it not sad, if they should be found to have been more thankful for the little dawning of Gospel light, which then but peep'd forth, than you for its Meridian light, who live to see the Sun of Righteousness with his healing wings spread forth upon you? but especially blest God for any inward light and life thou hast received from this Gospel; God hath done more for thee in this, than for thousands thou livest among, and those no mean ones neither; to this day God hath not given thy carnal Neighbours eyes to see, nor hearts to perceive that Mystery which is unfolded unto thee: are you thankful to him that hath taught your worldly Trade, by which you pick a small livelihood for your body? O what praise then dost thou owe to thy God, who by instructing thee in this Mystery, hath learnt thee an Art for saving of thy soul? Trumpeters delight to

sound where they have the best Echo; God delights to give his mercy to those that will most resound his praise.

SECT. II.

Secondly, The Gospel is a Mystery, therefore rest not in thy present attainments, either in thy knowledge, as it is a Mystery of Faith, or thy practice, as it is a Mystery of Godliness.

First, Rest not in thy present knowledge; 'tis like thou know'st much to what once thou didst; but thou know'st little to what thou mayst; some Books are learnt at once reading, but the Gospel is a Mystery that will take up more than thy lifetime to understand it. Mysteries are here sown thick, thou diggest where the Springs rise faster upon thee, the further thou goest; God tells not all his secrets at once; here a little, and there a little; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, Dan. 12. 4. The Merchants Ship takes not in all her Lading at one Port, but sails from one to another for it; neither doth the Christian enrich himself with this heavenly Treasure all at one time, or in one Ordinance; the true Lover of Learning, gives not over his chase and pursuit for a little smattering knowledge he gets, but rather having got the scent how sweet Learning is, puts on with fuller cry for what he wants: The true Doctor studies harder than the Fresh-man, because as he knows more of Learning, so by that knowledge he understands his own deficiency better; for the higher he ascends the hill of Learning, the more his prospect enlargeth, while the other standing at the bottom, thinks he knows all in his little.

Secondly, In thy practice, as it is a Mystery of Godliness; let not a little grace serve thy turn, when thou mayst have more: which that you may do, 1. Compare not thy self with those that have less than thy self, but look on those that have far exceeded thee; to look on our Inferiours occasions pride, *I am not as this Publican*, saith the Pharisee; but looking on others more eminent than our selves, will both preserve humility, and be a spur to diligence: *Miltiades* his Victories would not suffer *Themistocles* (then a young man) to sleep; the progress that some have made in grace (didst thou but keep them in thine eye) would not suffer thee to be quiet, who art now lagging so far behind, till thou hast overtaken them: May be thou hast got

some victory over thy passion, and art not such a Bedlam in thy fury as others; but didst thou never hear how meek a man *Moses* was, that could bear the murmurings of the multitude, yea, envy of his Brother and Sister, and yet his heart not take fire? Thou hast some good affections towards God, but how far short of holy *David's* zeal, whose heart did run out to God, as soon as his eyes were open in the morning? *When I awake, I am still with thee*; thrice a day, yea, seven times a day he would praise his God. Thou hast some patience, but hast thou learnt to write after *Jobs* Copy? thou art not without faith, but art thou like *Abraham*, strong in faith to follow God, when thou know'st not whither he will lead thee? *Secondly*, The grace thou hast will soon be less, if thou add'st not more to it; thou art upon a swift stream, let thy Oar miss its stroak, and thou fallest backward; there is not such a thing in Religion, as a saving Trade of godliness: Some men in their worldly Trade can say at the years end, they have neither got nor lost; but thou canst not say thus at the days end, thou art at night better or worse than thou wert in the morning. *Thirdly*, 'Tis the design of the Gospel to give grace in great measures; Christ gives life, and that more abundantly, John 10. 10. Now shall the Fountain be so large, and the Pitcher we carry to it so little? Wherefore doth God open his hand to such a breadth in the Promise, but to widen our desires, and encourage our endeavours? *Fourthly*, The more grace thou hast got, the easier it will be to add to it; a little learning is got with more difficulty by a young Scholar, than a great deal more afterwards.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Bear with one anothers imperfections; you see the Gospel is a Mystery, do not wonder therefore that any are not presently Masters of their Art; Christ bears with the Saints imperfections, well may the Saints one with another; how raw were the Disciples in their knowledge? how long did they stand at one Lesson before they could learn it? *Do you now believe* says Christ, John 16. 31. He had born with them long, and inculcated the same thing often, before it entered their minds; yet alas, we can hardly have a good opinion of, or hold communion with those that are not every way of our judgement, and cannot see things so clear as our selves; surely we mistake the nature of the Gospel, as if there were none but plain points in it; blessed be God, as to principles necessary to salvation, though their nature be high and mysterious, yet they are clearly and plainly asserted in the Word: *Without controversie, great is the Mystery of godliness*, 2 Tim. 3. ult. Godliness is a Mystery, but it is without controversie, as to the main fundamental points and practices of it, there is no dispute among the faithful; but there are some points more remote from the vital parts of Religion that have knots not easily untied, which makes some difference of judgement; but it is not every excess or defect makes a Monster (as six or four fingers on the hand) but an excess or defect in some principal

part; neither doth every mistake make a Monster in Religion: Remember that the Gospel is a Mystery, and you will bear with one anothers ignorance the better; and when love hath once laid the dust which passion and prejudice hath blown in our eyes, we shall then stand at greater advantage for finding out Truth.

Again, Bear with weaknesses in the practick part of Religion; Godliness, as well as the Doctrine of our Faith, is a Mystery; all the servants in a Shop cannot work alike, some bungle at it more than other (as their parts and experiences are less) all Saints are not of a height; Christ hath some Children in his Family that are led with strings, as well as others that go strongly without such help; some act more upon pure Gospel principles (love, and a spirit of Adoption) others have not yet worn off their legal fears and terrors; some are got higher up the Hill of Faith, and have clearer apprehensions of their spiritual state; others are nearer the bottom, who (as the Sun newly risen above the Horizon) are wrapt up with many clouds of perplexing fears and doubts: *In a word*, Some are got further out of their passions, have greater Mastery over their corruptions, than other of their Brethren; pity thy weak Brother, and take him by the hand for his help, but despise him not, *God can make even him stand*, and suffer thee to fall; Christ doth not quench the smoking Flax, why should we? The weak Christian is welcome to his heavenly Father, as well as the strong, why should he not be so to his Brethren? But alas, the Proverb is here too true, *Better speak to the Master, than the man; the Father, than the Child*: Those that can be so bold with God, dare not be free with their Fellow-servants and Brethren.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Is the Gospel a Mystery? then Christian, long for Heaven; there, and only there shall this Mystery be fully known: the great things which were spoken concerning the Gospel-Church, made many Saints and Prophets before Christs time, desire to see those happy times wherein such Revelations should be made; how much more should we long for Heaven, where this great Mystery shall be fully open'd, and every Box of this Cabinet unlockt, in which lye so many precious Jewels to this day, unseen by any Saint on earth! then it will be said, *The Mystery of God is finished*, Rev. 10. 7. Here we learn our knowledge of it by little and little, like one that reads a Book as it comes from the Press, sheet by sheet; there we shall see it all together: Here we get a little light from this Sermon, a little more from the next, and thus our stock encreases by the addition of a few pence thrown in, some to day, and more to morrow; but there we shall have all at once: Here we learn with much pain and difficulty, there without travel and trouble: glorified Saints, though they cease not from work, yet rest from labour: Here passion blinds our minds, that we mistake Error for Truth, and Truth for Error; but then these clouds shall be scattered and gone: Here the weakness of natural parts

parts keeps many in the dark, and renders them uncapable of apprehending some Truths, which other of their Brethren are led into; but there the strong shall not prevent the weak, the Scholar shall know as much as his Master, the People as their Minister. Here the squabbles and contentions among the godly, do leave the weaker sort at great uncertainty what to think concerning many Truths; but there they shall all agree, which comforted that holy man on his Death-bed, that he was going thither, where *Luther* and *Calvin* were reconcil'd: Here we are disturb'd in our enquiries after Truth; one while the necessary occasions of this world divert us, another while the weakness and infirmities of our bodies hinder us; but in heaven our bodies will call for none of this tending, we shall need provide neither rayment for the back, nor food for the belly. O happy death that will ease us of all the aches of our bodies, and conflicts in our souls! Thou art the only Physician to cure all the Saints distempers in both; when that blessed hour comes then lift up your heads with joy, for it will lead you into that blissful place where you shall see Christ, not a great way off, not with the eye of Faith in the optick Glafs of an Ordinance or Promise, but with a glorified eye behold his very person, never more to lose the sight of him: Thou

shalt not tast his love in a little morsel of Sacramental Bread, and sip of wine, but lay thy mouth to the Fountain, and from his bosom drink thy full draught. Thou shalt no more hear what a glorious place Heaven is as thou wert wont to have it set forth by the sorry Rhetorick of a mortal man, preaching to thee of that with which himself was but little acquainted: but shalt walk thy self in the streets of that glorious City, and bless thy self when thou art there, to think what poor low thoughts thou and thy Minister also had thereof, when on Earth thou didst meditate, and he did preach on this Subject; one moments sight of that Glory will inform thee more, than all the Comments and Books writ of it, were ever able to do; and dost thou not yet cry out, How long will it be, O Lord, most holy and true, before thou bringest me thither? Is not every hour a day, day a month, month a year, yea age till that time comes? As *Bernard* upon those words, *John* 16. 16. *A little while, and ye shall not see me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me*, passionately breaks forth: *Pie Domine, modicum illud votus, in quo te non videam? O modicum, modicum longum!* Holy Lord, dost thou call that a little while in which I shall not see thee? O this little, is a long little while.

CHAP. VII.

An Exhortation to study this Mystery of the Gospel, with some Directions thereunto given.

2. **B**E you provoked, who are yet strangers to this Mystery, to get the knowledge of it; yea, endeavour to gain an intimate acquaintance with it: To move you thereunto, I shall make use only of these two Arguments.

SECT. I.

First, Consider the Author of this Mystery: Secondly, The subject matter of it.

First, The Author of it; that Book must needs be worth the reading, which hath God for the Author; that Mystery deserves our knowledge, which is the product of his infinite wisdom and love; there is a divine glory sitting upon the face of all Gods works, it is impossible so excellent an Artist should put his hand to an ignoble work, *Psal.* 104. 24. *How manifold are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all.* But there is not the same glory to be seen in all his works. Our Apostle tells us, *there is one glory of the Sun, and another glory of the Moon, one star differs from another in glory.* Now among all the works of God, that of mans Redemption may well pass for the Master-piece; the World it self was set up to be a Stage for the acting of this picce of Providence, wherein

πολυποικιλία σοφία το Θεου, the manifold wisdom of God is so curiously wrought, that Angels themselves pry into it, and are wrapt up into an admiration of it, *Ephes.* 3. 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. Gods works deserve our study, and those most wherein he hath drawn the clearest portraiture of himself. The Gospel-mystery therefore above all other should be searcht into by us, being the only Glafs in which the Glory of God is with open face to be seen.

Secondly, Consider the subject matter of the Gospel; Christ and the way of salvation through him. What poor and low ends have all worldly Mysteries; one to make us rich, another to make us great and honourable in the world, but none to make us holy here, or happy hereafter; this is learnt only from the knowledge of Christ, who is reveal'd in the Gospel, and nowhere else. No doubt *Solomons* natural History, in which he treateth of all Trees from the Cedar to the Hyssop, of all Beasts, Fowls, and creeping things, was a rare piece in its kind; yet one leaf of the Gospel is infinitely more worth to us, than all that large Volume would have been; so much more precious, by how much the knowledge of God in Christ is better than the knowledge of Beasts and Birds: And we have reason to think it a mercy that that Book is lost and laid out of our sight, which we should have

been

been prone to have studied more than the Bible; not that it was better, but more suitable to the mould of our carnal minds. But to a gracious soul, enlightened with saving knowledge, no Book to this of the Bible. *Paul* was a bred Scholar; he wanted not that learning which commends men to the world; yet counts all dung and Dogs-meat in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. Well might he call it Dogs-meat; for a man may feed all his life-time on humane learning, and die (in Scripture sense) a Dog at last. It was the saying of *Bo-naventure*, that he had rather lose all his *Philosophy*, than one Article of his Faith. We read that those, *Acts* 9. were no sooner converted, but they burnt their Books of curious Arts; neither were they losers by it, for they had got acquaintance with one Book that was worth them all. Of all Creatures in this visible world, Light is the most glorious: Of all Light, the Light of the Sun without compare excels the rest. Were this eye of the World put out, the earth would be a grott, a grave, in which we should be buried alive. What were the *Egyptians* while under the plague of Darkness, but like so many dead men? they had friends, but could not see them; Estates abroad in the Fields, but could not enjoy them. Now what the Sun is to the sensible world, that is Christ in the Gospel to the intellectual world of Souls: without this light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, what can the Soul do or enjoy aright? mans soul is of high, yea royal extraction; for God is the Father of Spirits; but this Child meets his heavenly Father in the Dark, and knows him not; He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not, *John* 1. 10. And as it is of high birth, so intended for a high end, to glorify and enjoy God its Maker. Now for want of the knowledge of Christ it can do neither; but debaseth it self to the drudgery of sin, and sensual embraces of the Creature, instead of God, for whom it was at first made; like the Son of some great Prince, who not knowing his Royal descent, casts himself away in marriage on some Beggars Daughter. O how should we prize and study this Mystery therefore, that brings us to the true knowledge of God, and the way how we may recover our interest in him, and happiness with him? Mans primitive happiness consisted in Gods love to him, and his likeness to God. The Gospel discovers a way how man may be restored to both. The first it doth as it is a Mystery of Faith, by revealing Christ and his atonement for our reconciliation with God: The latter as it is a mystery of Godliness, and the instrument which Christ useth in the hand of his Spirit to create man anew, and as it were the tool to re-ingrave the Image of God upon him with.

SECT. II.

But how may we be led into the saving knowledge of this Mystery?

First, Think not to obtain it by the strength of thy Reason or natural Parts; tis not learnt as other

Secrets in Nature or humane Arts, of which those that have the most piercing wit and strongest brain, soonest get the mastery. None have been more mistaken, or err'd more foully in their apprehensions about Gospel-truths, than the greatest Scholars, Sons of Reason, and men admired for their Parts and Learning; the cause whereof may be partly their pride and self-confidence, which God ever was, and will be an enemy to; and also because the Mysteries of the Gospel do not suite and jump with the principles of carnal Reason and wisdom, whence it comes to pass that the wiser part of the world (as they are counted) have commonly rejected the grand principles of Evangelical Faith as absurd and irrational. Tell a wife *Arrian*, that Christ is God and man in one person, and he laughs at it, as they did at *Paul* when he mentioned the Resurrection of the Body, *Acts* 17. 32. because the key of his understanding fits not the Wards of this Lock; when a merit-monger hears of being justified by Faith, and not by Works, it will not go down with him. It seems as ridiculous to him, that a man should be justified by the righteousness which another fulfils, as for a man to live by the meat another eats, and be warm with the cloaths another wears; tell him when he hath lived never so holily, he must renounce his own work, and be beholden to anothers merit, you shall as soon perswade him to sell his Estate, to get his living by begging at anothers door. These are hard sayings, at which they take offence, and go away, or labour to pervert the simplicity of Gospel Revelation to their own sense. Resolve therefore to come (when thou readest the Gospel) not to dispute with thy Maker, but to believe what he reveals to be his mind. Call not divine Mysteries to give an account to thy shallow understanding: What is this but to try a Prince at a Subjects Bar? When thou hast laid aside the pride of thy reason, then thou art fit to be admitted a Scholar in Christs School; and not till then.

Object. But must we cease to be men, when we become Christians?

Ans. No, we cease not to be men, but to be proud men, when we lay aside the confidence of our own understanding to acquiesce in the wisdom and truth of God. An implicate faith is absurd and irrational, when a man requires it of us, who may deceive, or be deceived in what he saith. But when God speaks, tis all the reason in the world we should believe what he saith to be true, though we cannot comprehend what he saith; for we know he who is infinite wisdom cannot himself be deceived, and he who is Truth and Faithfulness will not deceive us.

SECT. III.

Secondly, Thou must become a Disciple to Christ; men do not teach strangers that pass by their door, or that come into their shops, the mystery of their Trade and Profession; but their servants, and such as are willing to be bound Apprentices to them: neither doth Christ promise to reveal the mysteries of the Gospel to any, but those that will give up their

Whatever God has revealed must be true, however incomprehensible to reason. God has said it, therefore it must be true.

their names to be his Servants and Disciples; *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all things are done in Parables*, Mark. 4. 11. When once thou hast subscribed to the Covenant of the Gospel, thy Indenture is sealed; Christ is now thy Master, he takes thee for one of his Family and Charge, and so will look to thy breeding and education; but for those, on whose hearts and affections he hath no hold; they come, may be, to the Ordinance, but when the Sermon is done, return to their old Master again; sin is still their Trade, and Satan their Lord; is it like that Christ should teach them his Trade? the mystery of iniquity and of godliness are contrary, the one cannot be learnt, till the other be unlearn'd.

Thirdly, If thou wouldst learn this Mystery to any purpose, content not thy self with a brain-notional knowledge of it. The Gospel hath respect both to the head and heart, understanding and will: To the understanding, it is a Mystery of Faith: To the heart and life, it is a Mystery of Godliness. Now these two must not be severed, 1 Tim. 3. 9. *Holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*. Here is both the *Manna*, and a golden pot to keep it in. Truth laid up in a pure conscience. Knowledge may make thee a Scholar, but not a Saint; Orthodox, but not gracious. What if thou wert able to write a Commentary on all the Bible, and from the Scripture couldst confute all the Errours and Heresies which were at any time broached and vented against the Truth, what would this avail thee, while thy own Lusts confute, yea, confound thy self? *If I understand all Mysteries, and have not Charity, I am nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 2. He that encreaseth knowledge, and doth not get Grace with his knowledge, encreaseth sorrow to himself, yea, eternal sorrow. It would be an ease to Gospel-sinners in hell, if they could raze the remembrance of the Gospel out of their memories, and forget that they ever knew such Truths. In thy knowledge therefore of Gospel mysteries, labour for these two things especially.

First, To see thy propriety in them.

Secondly, To feel the power and efficacy of them.

SECT. IV.

First, Thy propriety in them. Herein lies the pith and marrow of Gospel-knowledge. When thou findest what Christ hath done and suffer'd for poor sinners, rest not till thou canst say with Paul, Gal. 2. 20. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me*. When thou readest any precious promise, thou shouldst ask thy soul, as the Eunuch did Philip concerning that place of Isaiah, *Is it spoken to me, or of some other*? Am I the pardoned person? Am I the poor in spirit, to whom the Kingdom of Heaven is promised? Am I one in Christ Jesus, to whom there is no condemnation? How impatient were those two Prisoners, till Joseph had o-

pen'd their dream, that they might know what should befall them? The Scripture will resolve you whether your head shall be lift up to the Gibbet in Hell, or to the Kings Court in Heaven: Now in reading or hearing it preacht, this is it thou shouldst listen after, and enquire to know, where it lays thee out thy portion, whether in the promise, or in the threatening. There is a sweet Feast the Gospel speaks of, but am I one of Christs Guests that shall sit at it? There are Mansions prepar'd in Heaven, but can I find one taken up for me there?

Secondly, Labour to find the power and efficacy of Gospel-truths upon thee. When our first Parents had eaten that unhappy fruit which gave them and all man-kind in them their bane, 'tis said then *they knew they were naked*; doubtless they knew it before their Fall; but now they knew it with shame: they knew it, and sought for clothes to cover them, of which they found no want before. I only allude to the place; many know what sin is, but it is not a soul-feeling knowledge: they know they are naked, but are not ashamed for their nakedness; they see no need of Christs righteousness to cover it, and of his grace to cure it. Many know Christ died, and for what he died; but Christs Death is a dead truth to them, it doth not procure the death of their lusts, that were the death of him: They know he is risen, but they lie still themselves rotting in the grave of their corruptions: They know Christ is ascended to Heaven, but this draws not their souls after him. A Philosopher being askt what he had got by Philosophy, answered, *It hath learnt me to condemn what others adore, and to bear what others cannot endure*. If one should ask, What have you got by knowing the mystery of the Gospel? Truly you can give no account worthy of your acquaintance with it, except you say, I have learnt to believe what flesh and blood could never have taught me, and to do what I never could, till I had acquaintance with its heavenly Truths. This is to know the Truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. 4. 21. Had a sick man drunk some potion, which if it works will save his life, if not, will certainly be his death; O how troubled would he be, while he sees some operation it hath upon him? what means would he not use to set it a-work? If Gospel-truths work not effectually on thee for thy Renovation and Sanctification, thou art a lost man; they will undoubtedly be a savour of death to thee. O how can you then rest till you find them transforming your hearts, and assimilating your lives to their heavenly nature? Thus Paul endeavour'd to know the power of Christs Resurrection quickening him to a holy life here, without which he could not attain to a joyful Resurrection hereafter, Phil. 3. 10, 11. The Gospel is a glass, but not like that in which we see our bodily face; this only shews what our feature is, and leaves it as it was, but that changeth the very complexion of the soul from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

C H A P. VIII.

Sheweth it to be the Ministers duty to make known the Gospel, and why, with some questions about it answered.

YOU have had the sublime nature of the Gospel set forth; It is a Mystery. Now follows the second Branch in the words; What the Ministers duty is in reference to the Gospel; and that is to promulge and publish this Mystery to the sons of men; in these words, *To make known the Mystery of the Gospel*. Here the Ministers work is laid out; he is with all possible clearness and perspicuity to open this Mystery, and expose it to the view of the people. Mark, The Gospel is his *Sub-ject*, and to make it known is his duty: So runs the Ministers Commission for his Office, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature*, Mark 16. 15. We hear people sometime saying, The Preacher is besides his Text, but he is never besides his errand so long as it is the Gospel he makes known. Whatever is his Text, this is to be his design. His Commission is to make known the Gospel; to deliver that therefore which is not redutive to this, is besides his instructions. Nothing but the preaching of the Gospel can reach the end for which the Gospel ministry was appointed, and that is the Salvation of Souls, 1 Cor. 1. 21. *After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*. The great Book of the Creation had lain long enough open before the Worlds eyes, yet could they never come to the saving knowledge of God, by all that divine wisdom which is writ with the finger of God in every page thereof. Therefore it pleased God to send his Servants, that by preaching the Gospel, poor souls might believe on Christ, and believing might be saved. No Doctrine but the Gospel can save a soul; nor the Gospel it self, except it be made known.

S E C T. I.

First, No Doctrine but the Gospel can save a soul. *Galen* may learn you to save your health, if you will follow his rules. *Euclerion* and other *Law-books* will teach you how to save your estates; *Plato* and other *Philosophers* will learn you how to save your credits among men, by an outward just inoffensive life. Their Doctrine will be a means to save you from many nasty and gross sins, by which you may be applauded by your Neighbours on earth; and perhaps less tormented in Hell, where *Fabricius* finds a cooler place than *Caroline*. But it is the Gospel alone whereby you can be taught how to save your souls from Hell, and bring them to Heaven. But what do I speak of these? It is not Gods own Law (the Moral I mean) that is now able to save you. God would never have been at such a vast expence (in the blood-shed of his Son) to erect

another Law, viz. the Law of Faith, if that would have served for this purpose; Gal. 2. 21. *For if righteousness come (yea, or could come) by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain*.

Quest. Why then do Ministers preach the Law?

Ans. If they preach it as they should, they preach it in subserviency to the Gospel, not in opposition. *Qui scit bene distinguere inter Legem & Evangelium, Deo gratias agat & sciat se esse Theologum*. He that knows how to distinguish well between the Law and the Gospel, let him bless God, and know that he then deserves the name of a Divine. We must preach it as a rule, not as a Covenant of life. Holiness as to the matter and substance of it, is the same that ever it was. The Gospel destroys not the Law in this sense, but adds a strong enforcement to all its commands. Again, We may and must preach the Law as the necessary means to drive souls out of themselves to Christ in the Gospel. The Gospel is the Net with which we should catch souls, and draw them out of their sinning sinking state. But how shall we get them to come into it? Truly never except we first beat the River with the Laws Clubs (threatnings I mean.) Sinners lie in their lusts as fish in the Mud, out of which there is no getting them, but by laying hard upon their consciences with the threatnings of the Law, Rom. 5. 20. *Moreover the Law entered that the offence might abound*. That is, in the conscience by conviction, not in life by commission and practice. The Law shews both what is sin, and also what sin is. I mean it tells when we commit a sin, and what a hateful and dangerous thing we do in committing of it; how we alarm God, and bring him with all his strength into the field against us. Now this is necessary to prepare a way for the sinners entertaining the Gospel. The needle must enter before the thread, with which the cloth is sewed. The sharp point of the Law must prick the conscience, before the Creature can by the promises of the Gospel be drawn to Christ. The field is not fit for the seed to be cast into it, till the Plough hath broken it up. Nor is the soul prepared to receive the mercy of the Gospel, till broken with the terrors of the Law.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, The Gospel it self saves not except it be made known. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, 2 Cor. 4. 3. Where God sends no light, he intends no love. In bodily sickness, a Physician may make a cure, though his Patient knows not what the medicine is that he useth. But the soul must know its remedy, before he can have any healing benefit from it. Luke 1. 77. *John is sent*

sent to give knowledge of Salvation for the remission of *our sins*. No knowledge, no remission. Christ must be lift up on the pole of the Gospel, as well as on the tree of the Cross, that by an eye of faith we may look on him, and so be healed; John 3. 14. *Look unto me and be ye saved*, Isa. 45. 22. A man that sees, may lead another that is bodily blind to the place he would go. But he that would go to Heaven, must have an eye in his own head to see his way, or else he will never come there. *The just shall live by his faith*, Hab. 2. 4. not by anothers. A proxy faith is bootless. Now saving faith is a grace that sees her object; it is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. that is, which are not seen by sense. *I know* (saith Paul) *whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. Therefore faith is oft set out by knowledge; *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, John 17. 3. Now how can they know Christ and life eternal, till the Gospel be made known, which bringeth him and life by him to light? 2 Tim. 1. 10. And by whom shall the Gospel be made known, if not by the Ministers of it? Thus far the Apostle drives it, Rom. 9. 14. *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher?* So that this great work lyes at the Ministers door; He is to make known the Myserie of the Gospel.

Object. But what need now of preaching? this was the work of those that were to plant a Church; now the Church is planted, and the Gospel made known, this labour may be spared.

Ans. The Ministry of the Gospel was not intended only to plant a Church, but to carry on its growth also. What Paul plants, Apollos comes after and waters with his Ministry, 1 Cor. 3. 6. When the foundation is laid, must not the house be built? and this Christ gave Ministers to his Church for, Ephes. 4. *For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ.* The Scaffold is not taken down, till the building be finiht, but rather to be raised higher and higher as the fabrick goes up. Thus Paul went on in his Ministry from lower points to higher, from foundation to superstruictory truths, Heb. 6. 1. A famous Church was planted at Thessalonica, but there was something lacking in their faith, which Paul long'd to come and carry on to further perfection, 1 Thes. 3. 10. Surely, they that think there is so little need of preaching, forget that the Gospel is a Myserie, such a Myserie as can never be fully taught by the Minister, or learnt by the People. Neither do they consider how many Engineers Satan hath at work continually to undermine the Gospel, both as it is a Myserie of Faith and godliness also. Hath not he his Seedsmen that are always scattering corrupt Doctrine? Surely then the faithful Minister had need obviate their designs by making known the Truth, that his People may not want an Antidote to fortifie them against their poison. Are there not corruptions in the bosoms of the best, and daily temptations from Satan and the World to draw these forth? whereby they are al-

ways in danger, and oft sadly foiled! In a word, is not grace planted in a cold soil, that needs cherishing from the Gospel-Ministry? Do we not see, that what is got in one Sabbath by the preaching of the Word, is, if not lost, yet much impaired by the next? Truly our hearts are like lean ground, that needs ever and anon a shower, or else the Corn on it withers and changeth its hue. O what barren heaths would the most flourishing Churches soon prove, if these Clouds did not drop upon them? The Christians to whom Peter wrote, were of a high form, no novices, but well grounded and rooted in the faith; yet this did not spare the Apostle his further pains, 2 Pet. 1. 12. *I will not be negligent to put you alwayes in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

SECT. III. *Vain Preachers*

Use. First, To the Ministers. To reprove some, for encouragement to others. It reproveth

First, The vain-glorious Preacher; that instead of making known the Myserie of the Gospel, makes it his errand into the Pulpit to make himself known; who blows up his Sermon (as Butchers do the flesh they sell) with a windy Pomp of words, and frames his discourse rather to tickle their ears, than to profit their souls; to send them home applauding the Preacher for his wit and parts, rather than admiring the excellencies of Christ and riches of his grace. Thus many alas, who should be Factors for Christ, play the Merchants for their own credit. They are sent to woo souls for Christ, and they speak one word for him, and two for themselves. This is a great wickedness, which blessed Paul solemnly clears himself of, 1 Thes. 2. 5, 6. *Nor as a cloak of covetousness, God is my witness, nor of men sought we glory.* O how seldom are any converted by such Sermons! These *gloria animalia*, vain-glorious Preachers, they may be like Rachel, fair, but their Ministry is like to be barren.

Secondly, Abstruse Preachers, who do not make the Myseries of the Gospel known, but make Truths plain in themselves mysterious by their dark perplexed discourses upon them. This was the unhappiness of the School-men that ruffled and ensnarled the plainest Truths of the Gospel with their harsh terms and nice questions, which else might have been wound off by an ordinary understanding. What is said of some Commentators, the places on which they treat were plain till they expounded them; it may be said of some Preachers, their Text was clear till their obscure discourse upon it darkened it. What greater wrong can a Preacher do his hearers than this? The Preacher is to open Scriptures, but these turn the Key the wrong way, and lock them up from their knowledge. They are to hold up the Gospel-glass before their people, whereby they may see to dress their souls like a Bride against their Husbands coming: but by that time, that they have breathed on their Text, it is so obscured that they cannot see their face in it. That water is not the deepest, that is thickest and

stiff

muddy:

muddy : Nor the matter alwayes the moſt profound, when the Preachers expreſſion is dark and obſcure. We count it a blemiſh in ſpeech, when a mans pronunciation is not diſtinct. I know not then how it ſhould come to be thought a perfection, to be obſcure in the delivery of our conceptions. The deeper and fuller the Sculpture in the Seal is, the clearer the impreſſion will be on the Wax. The more fully any man underſtands a thing, the more able he will be to deliver it plainly to others. As a clipt ſtammering ſpeech comes from an impediment in the inſtruments of ſpeech, ſo a dark and obſcure delivery of our thoughts bewrays a defect in our apprehenſions, except it ſhould come from an affection of ſoaring high in our expreſſions above the reach of vulgar underſtandings. And this is worſt of all.

Moral Preacher Thirdly, The meer moral Preacher : The ſtream of whoſe preaching runs not in an Evangelical Channel. Moral duties he preſſeth, and ſins againſt the Moral Law he exclaims againſt. Neither dare I blame him for that. The Chriſtians Creed doth not vacate the ten Commandments. One of the firſt Sermons our Saviour preach't, was moſt of it ſpent in preſſing moral duties, *Mat. 5.* And never more need to drive this nail to the head than in our dayes, in which Chriſtianity hath been ſo wounded in its reputation by the moral diſhoneſty of many of its Profeſſours. But I level my reproof againſt them for this, that they do not preach the Law Evangelically, and make that the main deſign of their Miniſtry, for which they received their Commiſſion, and that is to make known the Myſterie of the Goſpel. To preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the Myſterie which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt, *Ephes. 3. 8, 9.* Did it make the Father undervalue *Cicero's* works (which otherwiſe he admired for their Eloquence) only be-

cauſe his leaves were not perfumed with the ſweet Name of Jeſus Chriſt : Surely then it is a foul blot upon their Sermons and labours, who reveal little of Chriſt and the Myſterie of the Goſpel thorow the whole courſe of their Miniſtry. The woe is pronounced not only againſt the non-preaching Miniſter, but the not-Goſpel-preaching Miniſter alſo, *Wo to me if I preach not the Goſpel, 1 Cor. 9. 16.* An Ethick Lecture will not make thy People wiſe unto Salvation. It were well if thou could'ſt preach thy drunken Neighbours ſober, and the riotous temperate : But this is no more than *Plato* did for his *Polemo*. This may make them men that were before beaſts ; But thou muſt get them to be Saints, regenerate ones, preach them out of themſelves, as well as out of their ſlagitious practiſes ; from the confidence of their righteouſneſs, as well as from the love of their ſins, or elſe thou leaveſt them ſhort of Heaven. Well then, ſmoke, yea fire them out of their moral wickedneſſes by the threatnings of the Law, but reſt not till thou haſt acquainted them with Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him. In a word, preach moral duties as much as thou wilt, but in an Evangelical ſtrain. Convince them they cannot do theſe without grace from Chriſt ; for want of which the *Heathens* virtues were but *ſplendida peccata*, gilded vices. *Per fidem venit ad opera, non per opera venit ad fidem.* We muſt come to good works by Faith, and not to Faith by good works. The tree muſt be good, before the fruit it bears can be ſo : *Without me ye can do nothing.* And then convince them when they are moſt exact in Moral Duties, this muſt not be their Righteouſneſs before God ; the Robe which they muſt cover their ſouls with (if they would not be found naked in his ſight) muſt not be the home-ſpun Garment of their own inherent Righteouſneſs wrought in them, but of Chriſts Righteouſneſs which he wrought for them.

CHAP. IX.

An Encouragement to faithful Miniſters, and how People as well as Miniſters are to make known the Myſterie of the Goſpel.

IT affords a word of ſweet encouragement to the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt ; haply you have been long at work for Chriſt, and ſee little fruit of your labours ; your ſtrength is even ſpent, and Candle is almoſt at the ſocket of old Age ; but your people are ſtill carnal and obſtinate, no Sun will tan them, no arguments move them, filthy they are, and ſo will continue ; to Hell they will go, no Gate can ſtop them ; thou haſt done thy utmoſt to reclaim them, but all in vain. This is ſad indeed (to them I mean) thus to go to Hell by broad day-light, while the Goſpel ſhews them whither every ſtep of their ſinful courſe leads them : But thou haſt cauſe of much inward peace

and comfort, that thou haſt done what God expects at thy hands ; remember thy work is, *To make known the Myſterie of the Goſpel*, and upon their peril be it, if they embrace it not. God never laid it upon thee, to convert thoſe he ſends thee to : No, to publiſh the Goſpel is thy duty, to receive it is theirs. *Abraham* promiſeth to diſcharge his ſervant of his Oath, if the woman which he was to woo for his Son, would not follow him ; and ſo will God clear thee of their blood, and lay it at their own door. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, he ſhall dye in his iniquity ; but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul,* *Ezek. 3. 19.* God judgeth not of his ſervants work by the ſucceſs

✓ ceſs of their labour, but by their faithfulneſs to deliver his Meſſage : *Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eye of the Lord, Iſa. 49.*

✓ Secondly, To the People : As it is the Miniſters task to make known the Myſterie of the Goſpel in his Pulpit, ſo your Duty to do the ſame in your lives : The Chriſtians life ſhould put his Miniſters Sermon in Print ; he ſhould preach that Myſterie every day to the eyes of his Neighbours, which the Miniſter preacheth once or twice a week to their ears : As a true-made Dyal agrees with the Sun in its motion, and as a well-drawn picture reſembles the face from which it is taken, ſo ſhould thy Converſation reſemble that Goſpel which thou profeſteſt ; let none have cauſe to ſay, what one once did of ſome looſe Chriſtians, *Aut hoc non eſt Evangelium, aut hi non ſunt Evangelici* : What haſt thou to do with any ſordid and impure practices, who pretendſt to be inſtructed in this high and holy Myſterie ? Thy Chriſtian name ill agrees with a Heathen life ; if thou ſuffer'ſt any that is not of thy profeſſion to out ſtrip thee, yea, but to keep pace with thee in any action that is vertuous, and truly honourable, thou ſham'ſt thy ſelf, and the Goſpel alſo : What a ſhame were it, to find one in ſome trivial Country School, that ſhould be able to poſe a Graduate in the *Univerſity* ? Thou art train'd up in ſuch high and heavenly learning, as no other Religion in the World can ſhew, and therefore your lives are to bear proportion to your teaching. It was a ſharp reproof to the *Corinthian* Saints, when the Apoſtle ſaid *οὕτως οὐκ ὡς ἀνθρώποι*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *Ye walk as men* ; that is, men in a natural ſtate : And he that walks thus like men, will not walk much unlike the very Beaſts ; for man is become brutiſh in his underſtanding, and it is worſe to live like a Beaſt, than to be a Beaſt : Surely Chriſtians, if you have not your name for nought, you partake of a nature higher than humane ; your feet ſhould ſtand, where other mens heads are ; you ſhould live as far above the carnal World, as Grace is above nature, as Heaven is above Earth. Chriſt would never have ſtoopt beneath Angels, but to raiſe your hearts and lives above men : He would never have humbled himſelf to take the humane nature, but on a deſign to make us partakers of the Divine ; nor would he have walked on Earth, but to make a way to elevate our hearts to Heaven ; ſay not therefore fleſh and blood cannot bear ſuch an injury, or forbear ſuch a ſenſual pleaſure ; either thou art more than a man, or leſs than a Chri-

ſtian ; fleſh and blood never reveal'd the Goſpel to thee, fleſh and blood never received Chriſt ; in a word, fleſh and blood ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of God. If thou beſt a Chriſtian, thou art baptized into the Spirit of the Goſpel, thou haſt a Heaven born nature, and that will enable thee to do more than fleſh and blood can do. Haſt thou no deſire to ſee others converted by the Goſpel ? Wouldſt thou ſteal to Heaven alone, and carry none of thy neighbours with thee ? Now how ſhalt thou win them into a good opinion of the Goſpel, but by ſuch an amiable life as may commend it unto their conſciences ? It was a charge long ago laid upon Chriſtianity, that it was better known in *leaves of Books*, than in the *lives of Chriſtians* : From hence it is, that many are hardened in their wickedneſs and prejudice againſt the Goſpel ; he is an unwiſe Fiſherman, that ſcareth away the Fiſh which he deſires to get within his Net. O offend not thoſe by ſcandals in thy life, whom thou wouldeſt have converted by the preaching of the Goſpel : There is now a days (ſaith one) much talk, as if the time for the *Jews* conversion were at hand ; but ſaith he, The looſe lives of Chriſtians do ſo diſparage this heavenly Myſterie, that the time ſeems farther off : Indeed the purity of Chriſtians lives is the beſt attractive to win others to the love of Religion. Had Chriſts Doves more ſweet ſpices of Humility, Charity, Patience, and other Heavenly Graces in their wings as they flye about in the World, they would ſoon bring more company home with them to the Churches Lockyers : This is the gold that ſhould over-lay the *Temple of Chriſts Church*, and would make others in love with its beauty ; this was one happy means for the incredible encrease of Converts in the Primitive times ; then the Myſterie of the Goſpel was made known, not only by the Apoſtles powerful preaching, but by Chriſtians *holy living* ; ſee how they walkt, *Acts* 2. 46. and what was the bleſſed fruit of it, ver. 47. *They had favour with all the people, and the Lord added daily to the Church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* It would tempt any almoſt but a Devil (who loves to live in the fire of contention, and is deſperately harden'd againſt all goodneſs) to have enter'd their names into ſuch a heavenly ſociety ; but when this gold grew dim, then the *Goſpel* began to loſe its credit in the World, and conſequently its takings. Converts came in ſlower, when thoſe that profeſſed the Goſpel began to cool in their zeal, and ſlacken in the ſtrictneſs of their lives.

CHAP. X.

Boldness a Duty in a Minister, in what he is to express it, what kind of boldness it must be.

THe third Branch presents us with the manner how the Minister is to make known this Mystery of the Gospel; *That I may open my mouth boldly.* We must here enquire,

First, What this boldness is, the Apostle desires prayers for.

Secondly, Wherein the Minister is to express this boldness in preaching the Gospel.

Thirdly, What kind of boldness it is that he must shew.

Fourthly, Some helps to procure boldness.

SECT. I.

First, What is meant by opening his mouth boldly: the words are ἐν παύσει, and import these two things.

1. To speak all that he hath in command from God to deliver, that lies full in the *Etymon* of the word: Thus *Paul* kept nothing back of Gods counsel, *Acts* 20. 27. *He concealed not the words of the Holy One*, as *John* phrase is.

2. To speak with liberty and freedom of spirit, without fear or bondage to any, be they many or mighty: Now this is seen, *First*, By speaking openly, and not in corners; the Trick of Hereticks and false Teachers, who privily bring in their damnable Doctrines: It is said, *Christ* spake that saying openly, *Mark* 8. 32. ἐν παύσει. *Secondly*, By speaking plainly: It shews some fear in the heart, when our words are dark and shady, that the Preachers judgement or opinion cannot easily be spell'd from his words, he lays them so close and ambiguous; the Minister is to speak truth freely and plainly: this was the Apostles boldness, *1 Cor.* 3. 12. *Seeing that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech*; πᾶν ἐν παύσει καὶ εὐαγγελίζομεθα, we use great boldness; so your Margin.

SECT. II.

Secondly, Wherein the Minister is to shew this boldness in preaching the Gospel.

First, In asserting the Truths of the Gospel: He is not to smother Truth for the face or fear of any: Ministers are call'd *Witnesses*; a Witness is to speak what he knows, though it be in open Court before the greatest of men. *Paul* had a free tongue to speak the Truth, even in Prison, though he was in Bonds; yet he tells us, *The Truth was not bound*, *2 Tim.* 2. 9. Some Truths will go down easily, to preach these requires no boldness. The worst in the Congregation will give the Preacher thanks for his pains upon some Subject; but there are displeasing Truths, Truths that cross the opinion (may be) of some in the Assembly; to preach these, re-

quires a free and bold spirit. When *Christ* was to preach before the *Pharisees*, he was not afraid to preach against their Errours; had some wary Preacher been to have stood in his place, he would have pitch'd upon such a Subject, as should not have offended their tender ears. There are Truths that expose the Preacher to scorn and derision, yet not to be conceal'd; *Paul* preach't the *Resurrection*, though some in the Assembly mock'd him for his pains. There are Truths that sometimes may expose the Minister to danger, Truths that carry the Cross at their back; such was that Truth, that *Isaiah* deliver'd concerning the rejection of the *Jews*, *Rom.* 10. 20. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not.* This was like to enrage his Country-men, and bring their fists about his ears. We read of a word of patience, which we are to keep, *Rev.* 7. 10. Such a word as the Preacher had need have good store of patience that delivers it, and Christians that profess it, because it may bring them into trouble, and draw the Persecutors Sword against them. This is not always the same; the word of patience in the Apostles time, was truths levell'd against *Judaism* and *Heathenism*, under the *Arrian Emperours*; it was the Deity of *Christ*: In *Luther*'s time the Doctrine of Justification, and others asserted by him against the *Romish Church*.

Secondly, Boldness in reproving sin, and denouncing judgment against impenitent sinners; they are commanded to lift up their voice like a Trumpet, and tell *Jerusalem* her sins; *Preach the Word* (saith *Paul*) *be instant in season and out of season*; reprove, rebuke with all long suffering. He must reprove and continue therein; while they continue to sin; the Dog ceaseth not to bark, so long as the Thief is in the Yard: A Minister without this boldness, is like a smooth File, a Knife without an edge; a Sentinel that is afraid to let off his Gun, when he should alarm the City upon a danger approaching. Nothing more unworthy, than to see people bold to sin, and the Minister afraid to reprove: 'Tis said of *Tacitus*, That he took the same liberty to write the *Emperours Lives*, that they took in leading them; so should the Minister in reproving sin, be they who they will; not the Beggars sin, and spare the Gentlemen; not the Prophane, and skip over the Professors sin; it was all one to *Christ*, whoever sinn'd, should hear of it: The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, them he paid to purpose; neither connives he at his own Disciples, but rebukes them sharply; *Get thee behind me Satan* (saith he) to *Peter*. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* to his own Mother for her unseasonable importunity.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, What kind of boldness must the Minister's be?

First, A convincing boldness: How forcible are right words? saith *Job*: And how feeble are empty words, though shot with a thundering voice? Great words in reproofing an Error or Sin, but weak Arguments, produce laughter oftner than tears. *Festus* thought it unreasonable to send a Prisoner, and not wishal to signifie the crimes laid against him, *Acts* 25.

27. Much more unreasonable is it in the Pulpit to condemn an Error, and not prove it so; a practice, and not convince of the evil of it. The *Apostle* saith of some, *Their mouths must be stoppt*, *Tit.* 1. 11. They are convincing Arguments that must stop the mouth; empty reproofs will sooner open the mouths of those that are reprov'd, wider, than shut them; the Spirit of God reproveth by convincing, *John* 16. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the World of sin, *ἐλέγξει*, he will convince: And so should the Minister; this is to preach in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

Secondly, A wise boldness: The Minister is to reprove the sins of all, but to personate none. *Paul* being to preach before a lascivious and unrighteous Prince, toucht him to the quick, but did not name him in his Sermon. *Felix* his Conscience would save *Paul* that labour; he trembled, though *Paul* did not say he meant him.

Thirdly, A meek boldness: The words of wise men are heard in quiet, *Eccles.* 9. 17. Let the reproof be as sharp as thou wilt, but thy spirit must be meek: Passion raiseth the blood of him that is reprov'd; but Compassion turns his bowels; the oyl in which the Nail is dipt, makes it drive the easier, which otherwise might have rived the Board. We must not denounce wrath in wrath, lest sinners think we wish their Misery; but rather with such tenderness, that they may see it is no pleasing work to us to rake in their wounds, but do it, that we might not by a cruel silence and foolish pity, be accessory to their ruine, which we cordially desire to prevent. *Jeremiah* founds the Alarm of Judgement, and tells them of a dismal Calamity approaching; yet at the same time appeals to God, and clears himself of all cruelty towards them: *Jer.* 17. 16. *I have not hastned from being a Pastour to follow thee; neither have I desired the woful day, thou knowest that which came out of my lips was right before thee: As if he had said, I have deliver'd my Message in denouncing Judgment; (for I durst do no other) but it was with a merciful heart; I threatned ruine, but wisht for peace: Thus Daniel, he dealt plainly and roundly with the King, but ushers in his hard Message with an affectionate expression of his Love and Loyalty to him; My Lord, the Dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies, Dan. 4. 19.*

Fourthly, An humble boldness; such a boldness as is rais'd from a confidence in God, not from our selves, our own parts and ability, courage or stoutness: *Paul* is bold, and yet can tremble, and be in fear, bold, in confidence of his God, *1 Thef.*

2. 2. *We were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention; but full of fear, in the sense of his own weakness. 1 Cor. 2. 3. I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.*

Fifthly, A zealous boldness; our reproofs of sin must come from a warm heart. *Paul's* spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the City given to idolatry. *Jeremy* tells us, *The Word of God was as fire in his bones*; it broke out of his mouth as the flame out of a Furnace: The Word is a Hammer, but it breaks not the flinty heart when lightly laid on. *King James* said of a Minister in his time, he Preacht, *As if Death were at his back*. Ministers should set forth Judgement, as if it were at the sinners back, ready to take hold of him: Cold reproofs or threatnings, they are like the rumblings of Thunder a far off, which affrights not, as a clap over our head doth. I told you the Ministers boldness must be meek and merciful, but not to prejudice Zeal. The Physician may sweeten his Pill to make his Patient swallow it the better; but not to such a degree, as will weaken the force of its operation.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, We promised to propound some helps to procure this boldness.

First, A holy fear of God; we fear man so much, because we fear God so little; one fear cures another, as one fire draws out another. When your finger is burnt, you hold it to the fire; when mans terror scares you, turn your thoughts to meditate on the wrath of God; this is the plaister God lays to *Jeremiahs* wrists, to cure his aguish distemper of mans fear, *Jer.* 1. 17. *Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them: If we must be broken in pieces (so is the Original) better man do it than God; what man breaks in pieces, God can make whole again. He that loseth his life for my sake, and the Gospels, the same shall save it, Mark 8. 35.* But if God break us in pieces, it is beyond the skill of man to gather the sheards, and re-make what God hath marr'd.

Secondly, Castle thy self within the power and promise of God for thy assistance and protection: He that is a Coward in the open Field, grows valiant and fearless when got within strong Walls and Bulwarks. *Jeremiah* was even laying down his Arms, and flying from the face of those dangers, which his Ministry to a rebellious and enraged people expos'd him to; hear what course he had in his thoughts to take, because the Word of the Lord was made a reproach to him, and a derision daily, *Jer.* 20. 9. *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name.* Now what kept him from this cowardly flight? *Vers.* 11. *But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One.* Now he takes heart, and goes on with his work undauntedly; our eye, alas, is on our danger, but not on the invisible Walls and Bulwarks which God hath promised to set about us. The Prophets servants that saw the Enemies Army approaching, was in a panick fright; but the Prophet that saw the Heavenly Host

Host for his life-guard about him, car'd not a rush for them all; if God be not able to protect thee, why dost thou go on his errand at all? if thou believest he is, why art thou afraid to deliver it, when he is able to deliver thee?

Thirdly, Keep a clear conscience: He cannot be a bold reprover, that is not a conscientious liver; such a one must speak softly, for fear of wakening his own guilty conscience; he is like one that shoots in a rusty foul Piece, his reproofs recoil upon himself. Unholiness in the Preachers life, it either will stop his mouth from reproving, or the peoples ears from receiving what he saith. O how harsh a sound does such a crackt Bell make in the ears of his Auditors! Every one desires, if he must be smitten; that it may be by the hand of the Righteous, *Psal.* 141. Good counsel from a wicked man, is spoiled by his stinking breath that delivers it: Our Saviour was fain to bid them hear the *Pharisees*, because their persons were a scandal to their Doctrine, *Matth.* 23. 3. Even those that are good, are too prone to turn their back of the Ordinance, for the scandal of him that officiates; this is their weakness and sin, but woe be to them at whose wickedness they stumble upon this temptation. It shews the man hath a very good stomach, that can eat his Dinner out of a slovenly Cooks hands; and a very sound judgement, and quick appetite to the Word, that can fall to, and make a hearty Meal of it, without any squeamish scrupulosity or prejudice from the miscarriages of the Preacher.

Fourthly, Consider that which thou most fearest, is best prevented by thy freedom and holy boldness in thy Ministry. Is it danger to thy life thou fearest? No such way to secure it, as by being faithful to him that hath the sole dispose of it; in whose hands thinkest thou are thy times, surely in Gods? then it is thy best policy to keep him thy friend; for *when thy ways please him, he can make thy Enemies to be at peace with thee.* Man pleasing is both endles and needles, if thou wouldest, thou couldest not please all; and if thou couldest, there is no need, so thou pleasest one that can turn all their hearts, or bind their hands: They speed best, that dare be faithful; *Jonah* was afraid of his work; O he durst not go to such a great City with so sad a Message; to tell them they should be destroyed, was to set them at work to destroy him that brought the News: But how near was he losing his life by running away to save it? *Jeremiab* seemed the only man like to lose his life by his bold preaching, yet had fairer quarter at last, than the smooth Preachers of the Times; however, it is better to dye honourably, than live shamefully. Is it thy Name thou art tender of? if thou beest free and bold, the Word thou deliverest will be a reproach and daily derision to thee, as once to *Jeremy*: Thou maist indeed be mockt by some, but thou wilt be revered by more; yea, even they that wag their heads at thee, carry that in their conscience which will make them fear thee: They are the flattering Preachers (who are *partial in the Law*) that become base among the people, *Mal.* 2. 9.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Consider, if thou beest not now bold for Christ in thy Ministry, thou canst not be bold before Christ at his Judgement Bar; he that is afraid to speak for Christ, will certainly be ashamed to look on his face then. *We must all appear before the Judgement-seat of Christ, &c.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. Now what use doth *Paul* make of this solemn meditation? *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perswade men,* ver. 11. It is no wisdom to provoke the Judge, by flattering the Prisoner: A serious thought of that day as we are going to preach, would make us shut all base fear out of the Pulpit: It is a very small thing to be judged by man now for our boldness, but dismal to be condemned by Christ for our Cowardise. This is *Mans Judgement-day*, as *Paul* calls it, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. Every one dares tax the Preacher, and pass his sentence upon him, if he please not his itching ear; but Christ will have his Judgement-day also to judge them, that now take upon them to judge others, and his sentence will easily reverse theirs; yea, even those that now condemn thy freedom to reprove, would be the first to accuse thee for thy sinful silence. The wicked servant, who likes the remissness of his Masters Government (whereby he may play his ungodly pranks without controul) cries out of him at the Gallows, and is oft heard there, to lay both his sin and sad Catastrophe of his life (to which it brings him) at his Masters door; saying, If he had reprov'd me, the Magistrate had not condemned me; if he had done his Duty, the Hangman had not now been to do his Office. Thus may some at the last day accuse their cowardly Ministers, and say, If they had told them their danger, they had not run into it; if they had been bold to reprove their sin, they had not been so impudent to live in the practice of it, which now hath brought them to everlasting shame and misery.

Sixthly, Consider how bold Christ was in his Ministry; his very Enemies were forced to give him this Testimony: *Luke* 20. 21. *We know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly.* He spared not the proudest of them, but to their head reprov'd them, and denounced the judgement of God against them; when in the midst of his Enemies, he was not daunted with their high looks or furious threats, but own'd that very Truth, which they made his capital Crime. *Matth.* 27. 11. *Joh.* 18. 37. Hence *Paul* saith, *He witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate,* 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. And useth this as the most powerful Argument to conjure *Timothy* to be faithful in his Ministry. What greater incentive to valour can the Souldier have, than to see his General before him stand with undaunted Courage where the Bullets fly thickest? Such valiant Captains do not use to breed white-liver'd Souldiers; it is impossible we should be dastardly, if instructed by him, and acted with his Spirit: When the *High Priest* and *Elders* saw the boldness of *Peter* and *John* (who were converted before them) they soon knew where they had

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got this heroick resolved spirit; for it is said, *They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus,* Acts 14. 13.

Seventhly, Pray, and beg prayers for this holy boldness. Thus did the *Apostles* come by it; their boldness was not the product of any natural greatness of spirit they had above others; you see what stout Souldiers they were in themselves, by their poor-spirited behaviour at Christs Attachment, when they all ran away in a fright, and left him to shift for himself; but it was the Child of prayer, it was not bred in them, but granted from Heaven unto them at their humble suit; see them praying hard for it, Acts 4. 29. *Now Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy Word:* Mark, they do not pray against suffering, but for boldness to preach, whatever it may cost them. They desire not to be excused the Battel, but to be armed with Courage to stand in it; they had rather be lift above the fear of suffering, than have an immunity from suffering; let God but give them boldness to do their Duty, and stand to their Tackling, and they have

enough. Now see how soon God sets his *face* to their prayers; ver. 31. *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.* There's the Grace they desired, dropt into their bosome, in a further measure than ever they had it. If the Souldier have a desire to fight for his Prince, no doubt but he may have Arms for asking; if this be thy sincere Request, God will not deny it: See them also sending others to God upon this Errand for them, Col. 4. 3. and here in the *Text*. Certainly *People* cannot desire that of God for their *Minister*, which both he and they need more. It is a difficult Duty to them, but necessary for you; he cannot be a faithful Minister, that dares not deliver all his Message. When *Mauritius* the Emperour had enquired of *Phocas* his disposition, he said, *Si timidus est, homicida est: If he be timorous, he is a Murderer:* He that fears his peoples faces, is the man that is most like to murder their souls; so that you pray for your selves, while you endeavour to pray down this Gift upon you Minister.

CHAP. XI.

why Ministers called Ambassadors, their Dignity and Duty shewn therefrom.

For which I am an Ambassador in Bonds.

WE are at length got to the last general Head in the words, the Argument with which the *Apostle* backs his Request, the more effectually to provoke them to the remembrance of him in their prayers, and it is double: *First*, From his Office; *For which I am an Ambassador:* The second, From his present afflicted state, *An Ambassador in Bonds.*

First, Of the first, his Office. Ambassadors being Messengers of State, sent by *Princes* abroad about the great Affairs of their Kingdom, it behoves all good Subjects to wish them good speed and success in their Ambassy. Upon this account *Paul* being sent from the great God in Ambassage, as the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles*, desires the *Churches* prayers for a happy success to the Message he brings.

SECT. I.

Note. Ministers of the Gospel are Gods Ambassadors; the *Apostle* doth not monopolize this Title, as if none were so besides himself; for elsewhere he reads others in the Commission, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *We are Ambassadors for Christ*, that is, we *Apostles*, who are now upon the place, and in the employment of the Gospel, and such also as shall be dispatch'd after us to the end of the World up-

on the same Errand. The Authority of the *Apostles* Extraordinary Commission, and that which ordinary Ministers after them have, is the same for substance; only they had their Mission immediately from Christs mouth, and were Oecumenical, whereas ordinary Ministers receive it from the *Church* by an Authority derived from Christ, and are fixed to their particular Orbs, and are to lye as Ambassadors Legier in some one place, whither they are sent. In handling this Point, we shall enquire into these three Particulars.

First, Why Ministers are called Ambassadors.

Secondly, Why God chuseth to deliver his Gospel by Ambassadors.

Thirdly, Why he useth weak men, and not glorious Angels to be his Ambassadors in this Negotiation.

First, Why are Ministers call'd Ambassadors; and that is,

1. To set out the Dignity,
2. The Duty of their Function.

First, *The Dignity*: God by this Title would procure an honourable esteem of the Ministers calling in the hearts of all those to whom they are sent; this is more necessary to the good success of their Message, than is generally thought. I know very well that what Ministers speak on this Subject, they

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are thought in it to be rather kind to themselves, than friends to the Gospel: Men are prone to interpret it as a fruit of their pride, and an affectation they have of some outward grandeur, and worldly pomp, which they design to gain by such a magnificent Title: The *Apostle* himself was sensible of this, and therefore, 1 Cor. 4. when in the first verse he had call'd for that respect which was due to the Ministers Function; *Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; he gives a *Caveat*, ver. 5. *That they would judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come*. Then it shall be known from what spirit it is that we Ministers magnifie our Office, and have been acted by in our Function; and also by what spirit they are moved, who vilifie and despise both it and our persons, for our Callings sake.

SECT. II.

Now the Dignity of Gospel-Ambassadors will appear in three things.

✓ *First*, In the greatness of the Prince from whom they come.

Secondly, The greatness of the Person whose place they supply.

Thirdly, The excellency of the Message they bring.

First, The Majesty of the Prince from whom they come: Ambassadors have their respect according to the rank of their Master that sends them; the greater the Prince, the more honourable is his Messenger. Now the Ministers of the Gospel come from the great God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whom they Reign, and of whom they hold all their Principalities: This is their Master, in whose name they come; therefore *Moses*, when he was to deliver his Message to *Israel*, bids them *ascribe greatness to that God, whose Name and Will he was to publish*, Deut. 32. 3. The Potentates of the World have found to their cost, how deeply God takes himself concern'd in the affronts that are done to his servants; what brought *Israels* flourishing Kingdom to ruine, but their mocking his Messengers, and misusing his Prophets? Then the wrath of God arose against them till there was no remedy, 2 Chron. 36. 16. We cannot despise the Messenger, and honour his Master that sends him, Luke 10. 16. Few are so bold as to say with that proud King, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice*? Exod. 5. 2. But too many dare say, who is the Minister that I should obey his Message, repent at his Summons, tremble at the words he delivers? forgetting alas, they have Gods Authority for what they say; and so by a slinting blow they hit God himself in contemning his Ambassador.

Secondly, The greatness of the Person, whose place the Minister supplies; Ministers are but Deputy Ambassadors, Christ himself had the first Patent, call'd therefore the *Messenger of the Covenant*, Mal. 3. 1. and the *Apostle of our profession*, Heb. 3. 1. From him the Ministers receive their Authority: *All power is given to me, Go ye therefore and*

teach all Nations, Matth. 28. 18. So 2 Cor. 5. 20. *We pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God*. As if the *Apostle* had said, We do but deliver that message which Christ should and would have done, had he not been called to Heaven about the affairs of his Church, and therefore hath left us as his Deputies to carry on that Ministry which himself began when he was here below. Now, what an honour is it for a poor Creature to stand up in Christs room, and bring that message to poor sinners which was first committed unto him?

Thirdly, The excellency of the Message they bring. There are three kinds of Ambassies in the world which make way for their honourable entertainment, that are the Messengers to bring them to any State: *Ambassies for Peace, Ambassies for Marriage, and Thirdly, for Trade*.

SECT. III.

First, Ambassies for Peace. Beautiful are their feet, and honour'd are their persons, that bring glad tidings of peace along with them; especially when these four things concur in their Ambassage, which will be all found in the Ministers Negotiation.

First, When an Ambassador comes from some puissant Prince, whose power is formidable, and armies irresistible; an Ambassador from such a Prince to a People naked and unarmed, for peace and amity, O how welcome is his approach! Such a King we come from, he offers not peace because he cannot maintain a War, or stands in need of our friendship. Sinners need his favour, but he fears not their hostility; never could they yet shoot any of their Arrows so high as Heaven, but all have come down upon their own heads. What can he that spits against the Wind, but look to have it blown back upon his own face? and he that fights with God, but expect to have his Weapons beat back to his own head? Worldly Princes treat when they cannot fight: think not so of the great God: his instruments of death are ready, no place where he hath not his armed Troops able to fetch in his proudest enemies. No creature so little, but contains an Army in it big enough to tame the proudest King in the World. The worm under *Herods* foot, at Gods command shall seize on him, and eat out his heart. O with what fear and trembling should the Ambassadors of this God be received! When *Samuel* the Prophet came to *Bethlehem*, The Elders of the Town trembled at his coming, and said, *Comest thou in peace*? 1 Sam. 16. 4.

Secondly, When such a puissant Prince sends his Ambassadors for peace to a people that have already felt the impressions of his power, and are pining under the bleeding miseries which their War have brought upon them, O how would they run to open their City-Gates to this Ambassador! as willingly surely as *Noah* opened the Window to receive the Dove that brought the Olive-Branch after that dismal Flood. This is the deplored state which the Ministry of the Gospel finds Mankind involved in. What a forlorn condition hath our War with Heaven

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Heaven brought us into? Do we not feel the Arrows of divine vengeance sticking in our very heart and consciences? the curse of God cleaving to every faculty of our souls, and member of our bodies: Are not all the creatures in arms against us? and doth not Hell from beneath open its devouring mouth upon us, ready to swallow us up in everlasting destruction? And yet are we so stout, that we can find no Lodging in our Town for his Embassadors but a Prison? no entertainment to the offers of Peace they make, but contempt and scorn?

Thirdly, When the terms of peace he brings are honourable. Gold (we say) may be bought too dear, and so may the peace of one State with another. As when *Nahash the Ammonite* offer'd peace to the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, but upon condition that they should have every one his right eye thrust out, to lay it as a reproach on *Israel*, and therefore was rejected with just indignation; they resolving rather to die with honour than live with shame. 'Tis the custom among many of this worlds Princes, to make their demands according to the length of their Sword; where their power is great, 'tis hard to have peace on easie terms. Now this, one would think, should make the Ministers of the Gospel and their message infinitely welcome to poor sinners, that though they come from the great God that may make his own demands, (for who may say to God, What dost thou?) and might not only require the eye out of our head, but force the very heart out of our body, yet offers peace on such gracious terms, that we could not possibly have framed them so to our own advantage, had we been left to draw them, as he of his own free grace is pleased to propound them; there being nothing in the whole instrument of peace provided for himself, besides the securing of his own glory in our Salvation. See a little what he offers to poor sinners, and what he requires of them again. He offers to seal an Act of Oblivion, wherein all wrongs done to his Crown and Dignity in the time of our hostility against him shall be forgiven, and forgotten: So runs the promise, *He will forgive them their iniquities, and remember them no more.* He will not only forgive what is past, but receive our persons into favour for the future. A Prince may save the Malefactors life, but for ever banish his person from Court; but he promiseth access into his presence, *Rom. 5. 2.* By whom also we have access by faith into this grace (or favour) wherein we stand. Yea, he promiseth to restore the sinner to all that by his rebellion was forfeited. Treason taints the blood, degrades from honour, and confiscates the estate. God offers to take off the whole curse which beset the sinner for his Rebellion, and restore him to his primitive dignity; *He gives them power to become his children, John 1. 12.* and as his children makes them his Heirs, and that not to a Cabul here below only, but to Heaven it self, an inheritance in light, beyond all expression glorious; for godliness hath both the promise of this life, and that which is to come.

Now let us see what he expects at the sinners hand; not to purchase this his favour with a ransom out of his own purse: No, he empties his Sons veins to pay that. But he requires us First, To lay

down the Weapons of our Rebellion, (for he cannot in honour treat with us while we have that Sword in our hand with which we have fought against him.) Secondly, To accept our pardon and peace at the hands of free grace, attributing the glory of it to the meer mercy of God as the moving, and Christs satisfactory obedience as the meritorious cause. Thirdly, That we shall swear fealty and allegiance to him for the future: How reasonable these are, those that now reject them shall confess, with infinite shame and horror for their folly, when Christ shall pack them to Hell by his irrevocable sentence.

Fourthly and lastly, When in all this a Prince is real in the offers of peace, he makes and gives full security for the performance of what he promiseth, this must needs make the Ambassador that brings them still the more welcome. Treaties of peace among men are too often used but as a handsome blind for War; they intend least, what they pretend most. But when an Ambassador comes Plenipotentiary, and enabled to give full security and satisfaction against all fears and jealousies that may arise in the breasts of those he treats with, this gives a value to all the rest. Now the great God hath wonderfully condescended to satisfy the querulous hearts of poor sinners; guilt hath made man suspicious of God; his own unfaithfulness to God makes him jealous of Gods faithfulness unto him. Could Satan make Eve so soon question the truth of Gods promise? He saith but, *Has God said, Ye shall not dye?* and she is presently shaken out of her faith on her Maker, to believe her Destroyer. O how easie then is it for him to nourish those suspicions which do naturally breed now in our unbelieving hearts! How oft are we putting it to the question, Will God forgive so great, so many sins? May I venture to believe? Now God gives his Embassadors instructions from his Word to satisfy all the doubts and scruples which he injects, or which may arise from our own misgiving hearts. *Tota Scriptura hoc agit (saith Luther) ne dubitemus, sed certo speremus.* The whole Scripture drives at this to satisfy our doubts, and assure our hopes in the mercy of God. Saint Paul hath a passage something like this, *Rom. 15. 4.* Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. There are many expedients men use to satisfy the minds of those they deal with concerning the truth of their promises, and certainty of their performing them: Sometimes they ratifie them with their seal set to the Writing. Thus God gives the broad seal of the Sacraments, and privy seal of his Spirit, to assure the believer he will perform all he hath promised in his Word. Sometimes witnesses are called in for further security of the conveyance. Thus in the Purchase Jeremiah made of his Kinsmans field, he took Witnesses to the bargain, *Jer. 32. 10.* See Witnesses both in Heaven and Earth, ready to vouch the Truth of what God promiseth, and all agree in their Verdict, *1 John 5. 7, 8.* If all these will not do, then an Oath is taken, and this useth to be an end of all controversies. To this also doth

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God graciously condescend, not that Gods promise needs the Suretyship of his Oath to make it surer; for it is as impossible God should lie when he promiseth, as when he swears; but to make our faith stronger, which needs such supporters as these to stay and strengthen it; as is hinted in that sweet place, *Heb. 6. 18.* from which one flower the sincere believer may suck honey enough to live comfortably upon in the hardest longest Winter of affliction that can befall him. *Wherein God willing move abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutables in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, &c.* Now the greater security God enables his Ambassadors to offer poor sinners for the salvation they preach in his Name, the more prodigiously provoking is their unbelief and impenitency who reject it. When *Titus Vespasian* came into *Jerusalem* and saw the unspeakable miseries which the besieged had endured from those three sore Plagues, Sword, Pestilence and Famine, that had so long raged among them, it is said that he broke out into these words, *I am not guilty of all this blood which hath been shed, nor of the miseries this People have endured, they by their obstinacy have brought it upon their own heads.* O how much more may the Ambassadors of Christ wash their hands over the heads of impenitent sinners, to whom they have so often offered pardon and peace in Gods Name, (but they would not hearken) and say, We are free from your blood, it is your own obstinacy and desperate impenitency hath undone your precious souls; would you have accepted life at the hands of mercy, you should not have been cut off by the Sword of his justice.

SECT. IV.

Secondly, Such as come to offer an alliance by Marriage between one State and another, this is one great part of the Ministers Embassy: They are sent to let the world know what good-will the God of Heaven bears to poor sinners; that he can be content to bestow his only Son and Heir in Marriage upon them, if they also upon treaty can like the match; nay more, both Father and Son do earnestly desire it; 'tis a match which God himself first thought on for his Son; it sprang from the counsel of his own Will, and when this great indentment was transacted betwixt Father and Son (as it was before the foundation of the world) the Son declared his liking of it to his Father; yea, exprest the dear affection he bore to man-kind; for then it was, that *he rejoiced in the inhabitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* In pursuance of which, when the fulness of time was come, he took his progress from Heaven to Earth, that by marrying our Nature, he might also enter a near alliance with the persons of believers; this is the match Gods Ambassadors come to negotiate with you; the Scriptures are their Credential-Letters, that confirm under Gods own hand-writing and Seal, the truth of all they offer in his Name; there you have the picture of

this heavenly Prince they woo your affections for, drawn to the life in his glory, love and loveliness, that by knowing him, you may the better take liking to his person; there are the rich Bracelets of the promises, which his Messengers are in his Name to deliver to those willing souls that shall entertain the motion, and declare their consent to take him for their Lord and Husband; yea, they have authority to pronounce the contract, and to promise in Christs Name Marriage, which at the great day he will perform unto them, *2 Cor. 11. 2.* *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a chaste Virgin to Christ.* Stand here and adore, ye children of men, this low stoop of the Divine Majesty! O that ever it should enter into the heart of the great God, to match his Son unto his creature! and that not of the noblest House among them, for he took not upon him the Nature of Angels; but of Man-kind, not in its primitive state, but when it was lapsed and degraded of its primitive glory. For a high-born Prince to take a poor Damsel out of the Beggars row, is a thing that yet the World hath not been acquainted with; but to take one from the meanest Cottage, were not so strange as to take her from the Gaol or Bar, where she is condemned for Treason against his Royal Person; yet this is the very case, The Lord offers to lift up the head of his Rebel creature out of Prison, where it lies under a sentence of death for horrid Treason against his Crown and Dignity, to take it into his Bed and Bosom. Truly, I know not at which most to wonder; whether the mercy of God in making love to us, or our pride and folly that are so coy and hardly perwaded to entertain the motion. Though *Abigail* confest her self unworthy to be *Dauids* Wife, yet she was too wise to stand in her own light, by letting slip such an opportunity for her preferment, as was not like again to occur; therefore it is said, *She made haste to go with Dauids servants.* But alas, how do we either broadly deny, or foolishly make excuse, and hold Gods Messengers in suspense from day to day?

SECT. V.

Thirdly, Such as come with Embassies for commerce and trade: Suppose a Prince had in his Kingdom such rich commodities, without which his Neighbour Nation could not subsist, nor could find elsewhere: if this Prince should send an Ambassador to this people, and offer them a free trade, that they might come as oft as they pleased, and take of the good things of this Land; O how joyfully would such an Embassie be embraced! Mans happiness on earth lies in a free trade and commerce with Heaven; this world is a barren beggarly place, nothing is here to be had that an immortal soul can live upon, or find satisfaction from. In heaven alone, what it needs is to be found; the food it must live on, the cloaths it must wear, are both of the growth of this heavenly country. Mans first sin spoiled all his trade with Heaven: No sooner did *Adam* rebel, but a War was commenced, and all trade with him forbidden, therefore in our natural state we are said to be *as far off*, and without God

God in the world. The sad effects of this loss, are to be seen in the forlorn condition of mans soul, which was once so gloriously arrayed with righteousness and holiness, but now shamefully naked, not having a Rag to cover its shame withal. Now, God sends his Ambassadors to offer peace, and with it liberty to return to its first communion with him, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* He invites all to turn Merchants with Heaven, *Come ye to the waters:* By which phrase the Gospel is compared to a Port-Town, or its Key side, to which the Cryer calls people to repair, and buy Commodities that are there landed. Here it is that God sets forth the riches of his grace to view and sale without money and without price: That must needs be a gainful Trade, which brings in rich treasure without much cost exported; here is all the riches of Heaven to be had, and no money required for the purchase. Can you hear of this Pearl of price, and not turn Merchants for it? Or can your souls be maintained by your peddling worldly Trade? O why do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? 'Tis not necessary you should be rich in the world, but 'tis necessary you should have Christ and his

grace. In all your pains and travel for the things of this world, you are but Merchant-adventurers, 'tis a hazard whether you get them, or lose your labour: There is no certain rule and method can be learnt for growing rich in the world; there are some poor as well as rich of every Trade; but in this Trade for Christ and his grace there is an Office erected to ensure all your Adventure: *His soul shall live that seeks the Lord: He that hungers after righteousness, shall be satisfied.*

Secondly, Ministers are called Ambassadors in regard of their duty as well as dignity; where there is *honor*, there is *onus*; places of honour are places of trust and service. Many like well enough to hear of the Ministers dignity, with *Diotrophes*, they love preheminance, that would willingly be excused the labour that attends it. None have a greater trust deposited in their hands than the Minister. 'Tis *tremendum onus*, a weight that made the Apostle tremble under it; *I was among you (saith Paul) with much fear and trembling.* To them is committed the Word of reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 20. If the Treaty of peace between God and sinners doth not speed, the Ambassador is sure to be called to an account how he discharged his place: But more of the Ministers duty as an Ambassador afterwards.

CHAP. XII.

why God sends Ambassadors; why he treats not with sinners in an immediate way; and why he useth men, not Angels.

THe second thing we propounded to give an account of, was, Why God would send Ambassadors to his poor Creature.

I answer, *First*, Negatively. *First*, Not because he needs mans good-will. Earthly Princes their affairs require they should hold a correspondence with their Neighbours; therefore they send Ambassadors to procure peace, or preserve amity: But God can defend his Crown without the help of Allies. *Secondly*, Not because he was bound to do it. There is a Law of Nations, yea of Nature, that obliges Princes before they commence a War to offer Peace. But the great God cannot be bound, except he binds himself. When *Adam* sinned, God was free, and might have chosen whether he would make a new League with man, or take vengeance on him for breaking his faith in the first.

But Affirmatively, no other account can be given of this, but the good-will and free grace of God. When Christ (who is the prime Ambassador) landed first on earth, see what brought him hither, *Luke 1. 7, 8.* *Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us.* Tender mercy indeed, for the life of man lay under Gods foot at his pure mercy: He was no more bound to treat with his Creature, than a

Prince with a Traytor legally condemned. Wherever Gods Ambassadors come, they come on Mercies Errand, 2 Chron. 36. 15. *The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people.*

Quest. But if God will treat with his poor Creatures, why doth he it by Ambassadors, and not by himself immediately?

Ans. This is the fruit of divine indulgence; sin hath made the presence of God dreadful, Man cannot now well bear it. What a fright was *Adam* put into when he heard but the voice of God walking towards him in the Garden, and not furiously rushing upon him? The Jews had the trial of this, *Exod. 20. 19.* They soon had enough of Gods presence, and therefore came to *Moses*, saying, *Speak thou with us, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

Quest. But if God will use Ambassadors, why did not God employ some glorious Angel from heaven to bring his message, rather than weak and frail men?

Ans. The Apostle gives us the reason, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us; in vessels of a shell.* As the

precious Pearl is found in a shell, so this precious treasure of the Gospel shall be found in frail men; that the excellency of the work may be of God. The more contemptible the Instrument, the more glorious appears his divine power in using it for so high and noble an end. To see a man wound another with a Sword that is sharp and weighty, would carry no wonder; but to wound him with a Feather in his hand, this would speak it a miracle; to see men fall down and tremble, when an Angel (a creature of such might and glory) is the Speaker, is no great wonder; but to behold a *Felix* quivering on the Bench, while a man, and he, a poor Prisoner at the Bar, preacheth to his Judge, this carries a double wonder: First, that so poor a creature as *Paul* was, and in the condition of a Prisoner, durst be so bold: And also, that so great a person as *Felix* was, should be smitten with his words, as if some Thunder-bolt had struck him. Who will not adore the power of a God in the weakness of the Instrument? Had God employed Angels in this business, we should have been in danger of ascribing the efficacy of the work to the gifts and parts of the Instrument, and of giving credit to the Message for the Messengers sake that is so honourable; but now, God sending those that are weak creatures like our selves, when any thing is done by them, we are forced to say, It is the Lords doing, and not the Instruments. What reason God had this way to provide for the safeguarding his own Glory, we see by our proneness to Idolize the gifts of men, where they are more eminent and radiant than in others. What would we have done, if Angels had been the Messengers? Truly, it would have been hard to have kept us from worshipping them, as we see *John* himself had done, if he had not been kept back by the Angels seasonable Caveat, *Rev.* 19. 10.

Secondly, Ministers being men, have an advantage many ways above Angels for the work. First, As they are more nearly concerned in the message they bring, than Angels could have been; so that they cannot deceive others, without a wrong to their own salvation. What greater Argument for ones care than his own interest? Surely that Pilot will look how he steers the Ship, that hath an adventure in the freight. Secondly, Their affections have a naturalness arising from the sense of those very temptations in themselves, which their Brethren labour under: This an Angel could not have; and by this they are able to speak more feelingly to the condition of other men, than an Angel could do. So that what man wants of the Angels Rhetorick, is recompensed with his natural affection and sympathy flowing from experience. He knows what a troubled Conscience is in another, by having felt it throb in his own bosom, as God told his People having been themselves sojourners in *Egypt*, *You know the heart of a stranger*. And who will treat poor souls with more mercy, than they who know they need it themselves? Thirdly, The sufferings which Ministers meet with for the Gospels sake, are of great advantage to their Brethren: Had Angels been the Ambassadors, they could not have sealed to the truth of the Doctrine they preached, with their blood. *Pauls* bonds were famous at Court and Countrey also, *Phil.* 1. 14. *Many of the brethren waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear*. Angels might have sounded the Trumpet of the Gospel with a shriller voice; but men alone have Pitchers to break (I mean frail bodies) by suffering for the Gospel, whereby the glory of its truths (like the Lamp in *Gideons* souldiers hand) shines forth upon the eyes of their greatest enemies, to the confusion of their faces, and amazement of their hearts.

C H A P. XIII.

An Exhortation to hearken to Gods Embassadors, prest from several Arguments.

Use 1. **A**Re Ministers Embassadors? This shews the Gospel Ministry to be an Office peculiar to some, not a work common to all: An Embassador we know is one that hath his Commission, and Credential Letters from his Prince to shew for his employment; 'tis not a mans skill in State Affairs that makes him an Embassador; not ability in the Law that makes a man a Magistrate, but their Call to these places; neither do Gifts make a man a Minister, but his Mission; *How can they preach, except they be sent?* The Rules which the Spirit of God gives about the Ministers admission into his Function, were all to no purpose, if it lay open to every mans own choice to make him a Preacher: *Lay hands suddenly on no man,* 1 Tim. 5. 22. That is, admit none to the Ministry without good proof and tryal; but why should any be set apart for that which every one may do?

Secondly, Of Exhortation.

First, To the People.

Secondly, To the Ministers.

SECT. I.

First, To the People: Be perswaded in the fear of God to hearken to the Message these Embassadors bring, what mean you to do in the business they come to treat about? Will you be friends with God or not? Take Christ by faith into your embraces, or resolve to have none of him: We are but Embassadors, back again we must go to our Master that sends us, and give an account what comes of our Negotiation. Shall we go and say, Lord, we have been with the men thou sentest us unto, thy Message was delivered by us according to our instructions; we told them Fire and Sword, ruine and damnation would come upon them, if they did not at thy call repent and turn; we laid both life and death before them, and spared not to reveal the whole counsel of God for their salvation; but they believed never a word we spake, we were to them as those that mockt, or told what we had dreamed in the night, and not the words of truth and faithfulness. O God forbid, that this should be the report which at their return they make to God of their Negotiation! But the more to affect you with the importance of their Message, and your answer to it; Consider,

First, The wonderful love of God in sending you these Embassadors; 'tis not a Prince that sends to one of his own Rank, but a God to his Rebel-creature, against whom he might have sent, not an Embassador to treat, but an Army of Judgements to fight and destroy: 'Tis not against Rebels that are entrencht in some place of strength, or in the Field with a force wherewith you are able to resist

his power; but to his Prisoners fettered and manacled, to you that have your trayterous head on the Block; 'tis not any need that he hath of your life that makes him desire your salvation. A Prince sometimes saves his Rebellious Subjects, because he needs their hands to fight for him, and weakens himself by shedding their blood; but God can ruine you, and not wrong himself, if you perish, 'tis without his damage. *Luke 7. 30. The Pharisees are said to reject the counsel of God against themselves; 'tis you that suffer, not God.*

SECT. II.

Secondly, Consider what an intolerable affront is given to the Majesty of Heaven by rejecting his offers of grace. Princes Requests are Commands; who dare deny a King what he asks? and darest thou a poor Thimble-full of dust, stout it out against thy Maker? it is charged upon no less than a King, as an act of unsufferable pride, *That he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the Prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord,* 2 Chron. 36. 12. But what, must a King come down from his Throne, and humble himself before a poor Prophet, that was his own Subject; yes, when he represents the person of that King to whom he was himself a Subject; God will have him tremble, and bow not to Jeremiah, but to Jeremiah speaking from the mouth of the Lord. O consider this, ye that think it childish and poor-spiritedness to weep at a Sermon, to humble your selves at the reproof of a Minister; your carriage under the Word preach, declares what your thoughts of God himself are; when *Nabush* slighted *David's* Ambassadors, and abused them, the King took the scorn upon himself: *I will publish the Name of the Lord* (saith *Moses*) *ascribe ye greatness unto our God,* Dent. 32. 3. How should they ascribe greatness to God, while *Moses* is preaching to them? surely he means by their humble attendance on, and ready obedience to the Word he delivered in Gods Name.

Thirdly, Consider how much the heart of God is engaged in the Message his Ambassadors bring: When a Prince sends an Ambassador about a Negotiation, the success of which he passionately desires, and from which he promiseth himself much honour; to be opposed in this, must needs greatly provoke and enrage him. There is nothing that God sets his heart more upon, than the exalting of Christ and his Grace through him in the salvation of poor sinners; this therefore is called his counsel, *Heb. 6. 18. The pleasure of the Lord,* Isa. 53. *Abrahams* servant knew how much his Master desired a Wife for his Son and Heir from among his Kindred, and therefore

therefore presseth *Laban* with this, as the weightiest Argument of all other; *If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; if not, tell me:* As if he had said, by this, the truth of your love to my Master will be seen; so here, if ye will indeed deal kindly with God, tell his Ambassadors so, by your complying with them in that which he so affectionately desires: This the Lord Jesus when on earth, called *his Fathers business*, which must be done whatever comes on it: *Luke 2. 49. Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business?* He knew he had never come hither, but for the dispatch of this, and could not look his Father on the face when he went back, except this was finished; therefore as this sped, and the work of the Gospel made progress, or met with any stop in the hearts of men, he mourned or rejoiced; when it was rejected, we find him *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*, Mark 3. 5. When his Disciples make report how victoriously the Chariot of the Gospel ran, *In that hour (it is said) he rejoiced in Spirit*, Luke 10. 21. When he was taking his leave of the World, his thoughts are at work how the Gospel should be carried on, and the salvation of souls suffer no prejudice by his departure, he therefore impowers his *Apostles* for the work; *All power is given me, Go preach the Gospel to all Nations.* Yea, now in Heaven, he is waiting for the success of it, and listning how his servants speed in their Errand. Now what a prodigious sin is it, by thy impenitency to withstand God in his main design? Do you indeed deal kindly with our Master, whose Embassy we bring?

SECT. III.

Fourthly, Consider the weight and importance of the Message these Ambassadors bring unto you, it is not a slight, sleeveless Errand we come about. *We set before you this day life and good, death and evil*, Deut. 30. 15. *Hear, and your souls shall live*, Isa. 55. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. 36. We come not to entice you with the favour of an earthly Prince, who may promise Honours to day, and lose his own Crown to morrow. We bait not our hook with the Worlds Treasures or Pleasures, but bring you News

of a Heaven that shall as surely be yours, as you are now on Earth, if you accept the offer. We scare you not with the displeasure of a mortal man, whose breath is in his Nostrils; not with the momentary torment of Rack or Gibbet, which continue hardly long enough to be felt; but with the never dying wrath of the ever living God, and what we either promise or threaten in Gods Name, he stands ready and resolved to perform: *Isa. 44. 26. He confirmeth the word of his servants, and performeth the counsel of his Messengers.*

Fifthly, Consider on what Terms the Gospel and its Messengers stay among you; there is a time when God calls his Ambassadors home, and will Treat no longer with a People, and that must needs be a sad day! for when they go, then Judgements and Plagues come; if the Treaty ends, it will not be long before the War begins. *Elisha dyed, and the bands of the Moabites invaded the Land*, 2 Kings 13. 20. The Prophet once gone, then the Enemy comes: The Angel plucks Lot out of Sodom, and how long had they fair weather after? The Jews put away the Gospel from them by their impenitency, which made the *Apostles turn to the Gentiles*, Acts 13. 46. But did they not thereby call for their own Ruine and Destruction, which presently came flying on the *Roman Eagles* wings to them; they judged themselves unworthy of Eternal life, and God thought them unworthy also to have a Temporal; if once God calls home his Ambassadors, it is no easie matter to bring them back, and get the Treaty (now broke up) set on foot again. God can least endure upon tryal made of him, to be slighted in that which he makes account is one of the highest ways he can express his favour to a People; better no Ambassadors had come, than to come and go *Re infecta*, without effecting what they came for: *They shall know (saith God) they had a Prophet among them*, Ezek. 2. 5. That is, they shall know it to their cost, God will be paid for his Ministers pains. Now Ministers dye, or are removed from their People, and glad they are to be so rid of them; but they have not done with them, till they have reckoned with God for them.

Secondly, To the Ministers of the Gospel; you see Brethren your Calling, let it be your care to comport with this your honourable employment.

CHAP. XIV.

How Ministers should do the Duty of Ambassadors.

1. **S**Tain not the Dignity of your Office by any base unworthy practices: *Dignitas in indigno* (saith Salvian) is *Ornamentum in Luto*. O lay not the Dignity of your Function in the Dirt, by any fordid unholy Actions: Paul magnified his Office; do not you do that which should make others vilifie and debase it; that which makes others bad, will make you worse; *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* Joh. 6. 70. You are called Angels, but if wicked, you become Devils: We read of a *Prophets Reward*, Mat. 10. 41. which amounts to more than a private Disciples; and do you not think there will be a Prophets punishment in Hell, as well as Reward in Heaven? One faith, if any were born without original sin, it should be the Minister; if any could live without actual sin, it should be the Minister; if there were such a thing as a venial sin, it should be in the Ministers; they are more the servants of God than others, should not they then be more holy than others? Art thou fit to be an Ambassador, who art not a good Subject? to be a Minister, that art not a good Christian?

Secondly, Keep close to thy Instructions: Ambassadors are bound up by their Commission what they are to say; be sure therefore to take thy Errand right, before thou ascendest the Pulpit to deliver it. *I have received of the Lord, that which I delivered to you* (saith Paul) 1 Cor. 11. 17. God bids the Prophet, Ezek. 3. 17. *Hear the Word at my mouth, and give them warning from me*: It must be from him, or it is not right. O take heed thou dost not set the Royal stamp upon thy own base metal: Come not to the people with *thus saith the Lord*, when 'tis the divination of thy own brain: No such loud lie, as that which is told in the Pulpit; and as thou must not speak what he never gave thee in Commission, so not conceal what thou hast in command to deliver; it is as dangerous to blot out, as put in any thing to our Message. Job comforted himself with this, *That he had not concealed the words of the Holy one*, Job 6. And Paul from this washeth his hands of the blood of souls, Acts 20. 26, 27. *I am pure from the blood of all men; I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*. Pray observe, He doth not say, he had declared all the counsel of God; no, who can, but God himself? The same Apostle saith: *We prophesie but in part*. There is a *Terra incognita* in the Scriptures, Mysteries that yet were never fully discovered; we cannot declare all, that know not all: But he saith, *He shunned not to declare all*. When he met a truth, he did not step back to shun it; as when we see a man in the street, with whom we have no mind to speak, we step into some House or Shop till he be past. The holy Apostle was not afraid to speak what he knew to be the mind of God; as he had it from

God, so should they from him; he did not balk in his preaching what was profitable for them to know. Caleb (one of the Spies sent to Canaan) could not give them a full account of every particular place in the Land, but he made the best observation he could, and then brings Moses word again, *As it was* (saith he) *in my heart*, Josh. 14. 7. While others basely concealed what they knew, because they had no mind to the Journey; and this gained him the testimony from Gods own mouth, to be a man that followed him fully, Numb. 14. 23. So he that doth his utmost to search the Scriptures, and then brings word to the People, as it is in his heart, preaching what he hath learnt from it, without garbling his Conscience, and detaining what he knows for fear or favour; this is the man that fulfils his Ministry, and shall have the *Euge* of a faithful servant.

Thirdly, Think it not enough that thou deliverest thy Message from God, but shew a zeal for thy Master, whose Cause thou negotiatest. Should an Ambassador, after Audience had, and his Errand coldly done, then give himself up to the pleasures of the Court where he is resident, and not much mind or care what answer he hath, nor how his Masters business speeds, surely he could not say he had done the Duty of a faithful Ambassador: No, his head and heart must be both at work how he may put life into the business, and bring it soonest to the desired issue. Abrahams servant would neither eat nor drink, till he saw which way his motion would work, and how they would deal with his Master: Thus should Ministers, let those they are sent to, see they are in earnest, that their hearts are deeply engaged in their Ambassie: When their people shew respect to their persons, though they are thankfully to resent this Civility, yet they are to let them know, this is not it they come for, or can be content with; but that they would deal kindly with their Master, whose Message they bring, and send them back to him with the joyful News of their Repentance, and acceptation of Christ; they should passionately endeavour their salvation, one while trying to dissolve them with the soft entreaties of Love, another while beleaguering them with threatnings, that if they will to Hell, they may carry this witness with them, that their destruction is of themselves, and comes not on them for want of your care and compassion to their souls: It is not enough you are Orthodox Preachers, and deliver Truth; it is Zeal God calls for at your hands. He so strongly himself desires the salvation of poor sinners, that he disdaines you (whom he sends to impart it to them) should coldly deliver it, without shewing your good will to the thing. Christ, when he sends his Servants to invite Guests to his Gospel-Supper, bids them, *Compel them to come*

come in, Luke 14. 23. But how? surely not as the Spaniards did the Indians, who drove them to be baptized, as we drive Cattel to watering, with staves and stones; we are not to pelt them in with outward violence and cruelty practised upon their bodies; but a spiritual force of Argument, subduing their hearts in our powerful preaching: *Percutit ut faciat voluntarios, non salvet inuitos*, Bern. When God finites the consciences of men with the terrors of his threatnings, it is to make them willing, not to save them against their wills.

Fourthly, Let not any person or thing in the World bribe or scare thee from a faithful discharge of thy Trust: Ambassadors must not be Pensioners to a Foreign Prince. He is unworthy to serve a Prince in so honourable an Employment, that dares not trust his Master to defend and reward him; such a one will not long be faithful to his Trust: Nor will he in the Ministry, that rests not contented with Gods promise for his protection or reward: O how soon will he for fear or favour seek to save his stake, or mend it, though it be by falsifying his trust to God himself? Blessed Paul was far from this baseness, and hath set a noble pattern to all that shall be Gods Ambassadors to the end of the World. 1 Thes. 2. 3. *As we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which tryeth our hearts; for neither at any time used we flattering*

words, as ye know; nor a cloak of Covetousness, God is our Witness.

Fifthly, Be kind to, and tenderly careful of thy Fellow-Subjects; were it not strange, if an Ambassador sent from hence to Turkey or Spain, instead of protecting and encouraging the English Merchants there in their Trade, should hinder their Traffick, and employ all the power of his place to their prejudice and damage? surely his Prince sent him not to be an Enemy, but a Friend and Patron to his good Subjects there. The Minister as Gods Ambassador, is to encourage the Saints in their heavenly Trade, to assist them by his counsel, and protect them from the scorn that their wicked Neighbours cast upon them for their goodness. O how sad is it, if he shall bend his Ministry against them! if he shall weaken their hands, and strengthen the hands of the ungodly, in or out of the Pulpit, by his preaching or practice; better he were with a Millstone tyed about his Neck, thrown into the Sea, than thus to offend these little ones. Moses, he smote the Egyptian, but rescued the Israelite; what account will they make to God of their Embassy, who in the very Pulpit finite the Israelite with their tongues, twitting them for their purity, and stroke the Egyptian; the profane and wicked, I mean, in their Congregations, whereby they bless themselves, as going to Heaven, when God knows their feet stand in the ways that will undoubtedly lead them to Hell.

CHAP. XV.

Five several Notes shortly toucht upon, from Pauls being in Bonds.

THE second Argument with which he stirs them up to his remembrance in their prayers, is his present afflicted state; for which I am an Ambassador in Bonds. In the Greek, *ἐν αἰχμῇ*, in a Chain. When we hear of an Ambassador, and a Chain, we might at first expect it to be a Chain of Gold about his Neck, and not a Chain of Iron about his Leg or Arm; yet it is the later here is meant. Paul was now a Prisoner at Rome, but in *libera custodia*, as is thought by Interpreters from this passage, in a Chain, not in Chains; it being usual there for a Prisoner to be committed to the custody of some Souldier, with whom he might walk abroad, having a Chain on his right Arm, which was tyed to his Keepers left Arm; such a Prisoner (it is conceived) this holy man was now: Paul the Lamb, was Prisoner to Nero the Lyon; and therefore both needed and desired the Churches prayers for him. Many are the Observables which this short passage might afford; I shall lightly touch them, but not enlarge upon them.

SECT. I.

First, Observe the usage which this blessed Apostle finds from an ungrateful World; a Chain is

clapt upon him, as if he were some Rogue or Thief: He preacheth liberty to poor sinners, and is deprived of his own for his pains; he proclaims deliverance to the Captives, and is used like a slave for his labour. One would wonder what they could find against so holy and innocent a person to accuse him for, who made it his daily exercise to live without offence to God and man; yet see what an Indictment Tertullus prefers against him, Acts 24. as if there had not been such a Pestilent fellow in the whole Country as he: And Paul himself tells us he suffered trouble as an evil doer, even to bonds, 2 Tim. 2. 9. Many grievous things were laid to his charge.

Whence note,

Note 1. That the best of men may and oft do suffer under the notion of vile and wicked persons. Let the Saints enemies alone to black their persons and cause. Christ himself must be numbred among transgressors, and no less than blasphemy be laid to his charge. Persecutors think it not enough to be cruel, but they would be thought just while they are cruel. James 5. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just.* Here is a bloody murther committed with all the formalities of justice. They condemn first, and

and then kill. And truly, murder on the Beach is worle in Gods account, than that which is perpetrated by a Villain on the high-way. Well, there is a time when *Pauls* Cause, and the rest of suffering Saints, shall have a fairer hearing than here they could meet with, and then it will appear with another complexion, than when drawn with their enemies black Coal. The names of the Godly shall have a Resurrection as well as their bodies. Now they are buried with their faces downward, their innocency and sincerity charg'd with many false imputations, but then all shall be set right. And well may the Saints stay to be cleared, as long as God himself stays to vindicate his own government of the world from the hard speeches of ungodly ones.

SECT. II.

Note 2. Secondly, Observe the true cause of *Pauls* sufferings: It was his zeal for God and his Truth; *For which I am in bonds.* That is, for the Gospel which I profess and preach. As that *Martyr*, who being askt how he came into Prison, shewed his *Bible*, and said, *This brought me hither.* Persecutors may pretend what they will, but it is their Religion and Piety that their spite is at. *Paul* was an honest man in the opinion of his Countrey-men, so long as he was of their opinion, went their way, and did as they did; but when he declared himself to be a Christian, and preacht his Gospel up, then they cry'd him down as fast; then his old friends turn'd new enemies, and all their fists were about his ears. The wicked are but the Devils slaves, and must do as he will have them. Now it is Truth and Godliness that pulls down his Kingdom; when therefore these appear in the Saints lives, then he calls forth the wicked world, as a Prince would do his Subjects into the field to fight for him: So that it is impossible to get to Heaven without blows, *He that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* That is, one way or other; and none more than the Preacher. He puts his hand into the Wasps nest, and therefore must expect to be stung. He treads on the Serpents head, and it were strange if he should not turn again to bite him. But let not this trouble you. Fear not what you can suffer, only be careful for what you suffer. Christs Cross is made of sweet wood; there are comforts peculiar to those that suffer for righteousness. When *Sabina* a Christian Martyr, fell in travail in the Prison, and was heard to cry and make a doleour in those her child-bearing throes; some askt her, how she would endure the torments which her Persecutors prepared for her, if she shrunk at those? *O (saith she) now I suffer for sin, then I shall suffer for Christ.*

SECT. III.

Note 3. Thirdly, Observe how close *Paul* sticks to the Truth: He will not part with it, though it brings him into trouble: he had rather the Persecutor should imprison him for preaching the Gospel, than he imprison it by a cowardly silence. He

hath cast up his accounts, and is resolved to stand to his profession whatever it may cost him. The truth is, That Religion is not worth embracing, that cannot bear ones charges in suffering for it; and none but the Christian is able to do this. Neither is he worth the name of a Christian, that dares not take Chrills Bill of Exchange to receive in Heaven, what he is out in suffering for his sake on earth. And yet, alas, how hard is it to get faith enough to do this? 'Tis easier to bow at the Name, than to stoop to the Cross of Jesus. Many like Religion for a Summer house, when all is fair and warm abroad in the world; but when Winter comes, doors are shut up, and no body to be seen in or about it.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Observe the publication *Paul* makes of his sufferings to the Church: He being now a Prisoner, sends his dispatches to this and other Churches, to let them know his condition.

From whence, *Note first.*

Note 4. First, That sufferings for the Gospel are no matter of shame. *Paul* doth not blush to tell, it is for the Gospel he is in bonds. The shame belonged to them that clapt on the Chain; not to him that wore it. The Thief, the Murderer may justly blush to tell wherefore they suffer, not the Christian for well doing, *1 Pet. 4. 16. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorifie God on this behalf.* Christ himself counted it no dishonour to have the print of his wounds seen after his Resurrection. *Babylus* a Christian Martyr, would have his Chains buried with him. *The Apostles* rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name, *Act. 5. 41.* And if it be no shame to suffer for the Gospel, then surely it is none to profess it; and live up to its holy Rules; Shall the wicked glory in their shame, and thou be ashamed of thy glory? Shall they do the Devils work at Noon-day-light, and thou afraid to be seen to be good? Yet *Salvian* tells us in his days (so wicked they were, and such a scorn was cast upon holiness) that many carry'd Christs colours in their Pocket, and concealed their Piety, *ne viles haberentur*, lest they should be counted vile and base.

SECT. V.

Note 5. Fifthly and lastly, Observe the end why he makes known his sufferings.

First, That they may know the true cause wherefore he suffer'd. *Pauls* enemies laid heavy things to his charge, and these might haply fly as far as *Ephesus*. When the Saints are in a suffering condition, Satan is very industrious to defame them, and misrepresent the cause of their troubles to the world, as if it were for no good. Now, though *Paul* regarded little what the wicked world said of him, yet he desired to stand right in the thoughts of the Churches, and therefore acquaints them with the cause of his imprisonment.

Secondly, To strengthen their faith, and comfort

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their

their hearts: No doubt but Pauls Chain entred into their souls, and his suffering was their sorrow. This he knew, and therefore sends them word by *Tychicus* (the bearer of this Epistle) how it fared with him in his bonds, that they might not spend too many tears for him; who had a heart so merry and cheerful in his sufferings, *Vers. 22. That ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.* Thus have we seen sometimes a tender-hearted Father on his sick bed, not so much troubled with his own pains, or thoughts of his approaching death, as to see his Children take them so much to heart; and therefore forgetting his own miseries, addresseth himself with a smiling countenance to comfort them. O'tis an excellent sight to behold the Saints that are at liberty mourning over their afflicted brethren, and those that are the sufferers, become comforters to them that are at liberty. Never doth Religion appear more glorious, than when they commend it who are suffering for it: And no way can they commend it higher, than by a holy humble cheerfulness of spirit in their sufferings. The comfortable Letters which the *Martyrs* in Queen *Marys* days sent out of Prison, did wonderfully strengthen their brethren throughout the Kingdom, and fit them for the Prison. Sufferers preach with great advantage above others. They do not speak by hear-say, but what they experience in themselves.

Thirdly, To engage their prayers for him. Suffering Saints have ever been very covetous of Prayers. Paul sets all the Churches at work for him. *Pray, pray, pray,* was the usual close to Mr. *Bradford's* Letters out of Prison: And great reason for it; for a suffering condition is full of temptations. When Man plays the Persecutor, the Devil forgets not to be a Tempter. He that followed Christ into the Wilderness, will find a way to get to his Saints in the Prison. Sometimes he will try whether he can soften them for impressions of fear, or make them pity themselves; and he shall not want them, that will lend their tears to melt their courage, and weaken their Resolution: May be Wife and Children, or Friends and Neighbours, who wish them well, but are abused by Satan to lay a snare before them, while they express their affection to them. No doubt those good people meant well to Paul, who with

tears and passionate entreaties endeavoured to keep him from *Jerusalem*; (where it was foretold he should come into trouble) but Satan had a Design against Paul therein, who hoped they might not only break his heart, but weaken his courage, with their tears. When he cannot make a Coward of the Saint, to run from the Cross; then he'll try to sow and swell his spirit with some secret anger against those that laid it on. O'tis no easie matter to receive Evil, and wish none to him from whose hands we have it. To reserve love for him that shews wrath and hatred to us, is a glorious, but a difficult work. If he cannot leaven him with wrath against his Persecutor, then he will try to blow him up with a high conceit of himself, who dares suffer for Christ, while others shrink in their heads, and seek to keep themselves safe within their own Shell. O this Pride is a *Salamander*, that can live in the fire of Suffering! If any one Saint needs the humility of many Saints, it is he that is called to suffer: To glory in his sufferings for Christ, becomes him well; *2 Cor. 12. 9. Gal. 6. 14.* But to glory in himself for them, is hateful and odious. Needs not he a quick eye, and a steady hand, that is to drive his Chariot on the brow of so dangerous a Precipice?

In a word, As a suffering condition is full of temptations, so the Saints strength to carry him safely thorow is not in his own keeping. God must help, or the stoutest Champions spirit will soon quail: *In all things I am instructed; both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need,* *Phil. 4. 12.* This was a hard Lesson indeed to learn: Who was his Master? See, *Vers. 13. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.* Now as the Saints strength to suffer is not in themselves, but Christ: so prayer is the best means to fetch it in for their help; for by it they confess their own weakness, and so God is secured from having a Corridor in the Praise: which Paul is here free to do, and more than so: For as he confesseth he can do nothing without Christs strength to enable and embolden him, so he dares not rely on his own solitary single prayers for the obtaining it, but calls in the Auxiliary Forces of his Fellow-Saints to besiege Heaven for him: That while he is in the Valley, suffering for the Gospel, they may be lifting up their hands and hearts in the Mount of Prayer for him.

Finished reading this work 2 July 1845 at Beverley -

Praise the Lord -

Finished second reading

17 Mar 1848 - Praise the Lord, O my soul -

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